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THE ART OF THE POSTER

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THE ART OF THE POSTER

ITS ORIGIN, EVOLUTION & PURPOSE

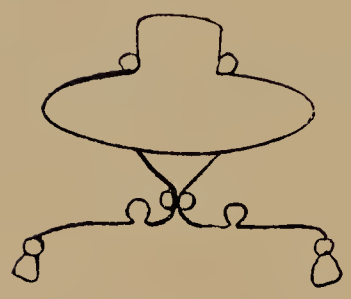
Arranged & Edited by

E. McKnight Kauffer



LONDON: CECIL PALMER
49 CHANDOS STREET, W.C.2
1924

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Omne meum, nihil meum

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TO
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"JUSTICE" IS OUR MOTTO



Justice stands forth with scales in hand,
She looks both noble, fair, and grand:
Our Motto is Justice, and you may be sure
We deal with Justice to both rich and poor

Send your children from where you dwell;
Sometimes you're cheated, and you know it well!
We give as much as others can—
We do Justice to both Child and Man.

It's Justice to save your Bones and Grease,
And put New Boots on your Children's Feet,
And then from cold they'll not fret and moan,
But Bless you for saving your Rags and Bones.

Go where you will you'll get no higher price—
For all your Cuttings you'll get Silver in a trice;
We buy Old Lumber, whether great or small,
Our Motto's Justice to both one and all.

SAMUEL REEVES, 13 CALEDONIAN ROAD, KING'S CROSS, LONDON, N.1

ENGLISH WINDOW BILL, EARLY 19TH CENTURY

(*By permission of the Publisher*)



INTRODUCTION

THE subject of the Poster is one no longer discussed exclusively by that section of the public interested in advertising. The limitations imposed by practical use have been outstripped, and the question now arises whether or not the Poster has æsthetic values. This situation is an outcome of the fact that Artists are turning their activities towards the hoarding and by so doing have affected the procedure and increased the possibilities of advertisement, and have shown that it is necessary for the advertiser to keep pace with some branches of public opinion. Psychologically, the change was inevitable from the moment that the first radical Poster appeared. It remains for the future to reveal how far the change of values may go. The modern Poster is still in its adolescence, and its future is too dependent on forces outside the control of the Artist to admit of prophecy.

Undeniably, the art of the Poster is quite different from the art of painting pictures, and until this distinction is made apparent there is likely to be a continued compromise between the two arts. Bad painters design bad posters. Herkomer, Leighton and Millais are prime examples. Good painters have always produced good posters. Daumier, Manet and Bonnard are a few examples. Structurally, painting and poster design have this in common, that proportion in design necessarily governs all works of art and craft. Apart from this, posters and pictures fall under different categories. The Artist, as Poster Designer, must bear in mind that the aim of the Poster should be to present a summary of the set of facts to be advertised and to group and interpret them in such a manner that they will be quickly grasped by the spectator and remain impressed upon his memory.

The Poster is more strictly *commissioned* than most other work. Usually the advertiser insists that all essential detail be incorporated in the design and also that the design be such as will appeal to the public. This public has rarely been consulted. It lurks, a vague but hulking shadow, anxiously consulting the Poster for relief from its numberless ailments ; it is desperate for food, shivering for lack of clothing, with a mind greedy for books, periodicals and newspapers, and it has a fancy of its own that should not be ignored ; it is indeed, a truth-seeking, nerve-wracked mass, uncertain and mysterious. This public, which it is the aim of the designer to attract, instinctively is his antagonist and remains such until otherwise proved. The good Poster may be compared to a well-selected fly cast by a skilful angler who knows his particular fish.

The period of the eighteen-nineties is the most important one in the history of the Poster. The influence of the radical designs of Toulouse-Lautrec during that period passed like a comet over the major part of the Western hemisphere. He became the apostle of the new Poster. His admiration for the Japanese print amounted almost to worship : he did not, however, imitate. He emulated its simplicity, finding Western types in the Music Halls and Cafés, that, eccentric as they were, could be adapted to the Japanese atmosphere of his compositions. In such a manner Lautrec provided the basis for a new spirit on the hoarding, and every subsequent designer has turned to his works because of their simplicity and daring.

The Poster of to-day shows as its most apparent characteristic a tendency to free itself from the bondage of " local colour." Design, as a psychological factor, is now more universally accepted ; extreme emphasis on local realism and on the accessories of the thing advertised being much less enforced. It has become customary to attach more importance to the inner structure ; and when the designer is given more encouragement to promote these tendencies, the hoarding may well become an object both of interest and instruction.

Clearly then the Artist must be considered. He may not be a practical expert, but he is beyond doubt the only reliable æsthetic force. As Editor of this book I have been at pains to emphasise this particular point, both in connection with the letterpress and with the illustrations. Since the three volumes of Charles Maindron which appeared in France between the years 1886 and 1897, there has been no comprehensive survey of the outstanding designs of the Poster. Owing to his interest, many examples have been placed on record which otherwise would have been lost. Inn Signs and Tradesmen's Cards are direct and closely related antecedents of the Poster. The specimens selected for this volume provide conclusive evidence that, as long as nearly two centuries ago, a standard in advertising prevailed, the excellence of which has in many instances never been surpassed. The technical efficiency in applying craft to the type of any given design is a revelation.

The printed lithograph Poster is barely a century old. It hardly asserted

itself until the eighteen-eighties and since that time it has undergone many vicissitudes. Contemporary poster design is fluctuating between a balance of inferiority and excellence just as it was in the eighteen-nineties. It is, in fact, at a similar turning-point in its history.

It is therefore an appropriate moment to review the Poster's progress both past and present, and to emphasise the importance of those designs that show a tendency to free the art of the Poster from the abuse to which it is so often subjected. A group of comparative sources has been made elsewhere in this volume to serve as an aid toward an intelligent recognition of the development of certain tendencies observable in the better posters. A common error of judgment is often made in the unintelligent use of the terms " cubistic " and " futuristic " generally applied to any poster design that does not look like all other posters. Some contemporary designs have shown both these tendencies individually, but few have been designed either with cubistic or futuristic finality. The comparative sources suggest therefore the foundation upon which much of poster design can be and has been built, or else a close fundamental relationship is shown which proves that all good design, whether ancient or modern, has a principle of rightness about it that only an artist understands. In compiling this reference, poster design is obtaining the justice it has every right to claim, for in spite of the swiftness with which it is made and used, study and experience are needed to make it the genuine art it proves itself to be.

In recording my acknowledgments, I would first of all thank the designers whose works are included in this volume. Mr. Gerard Meynell and Mr. Edward Hunter have by their encouragement and practical assistance enabled me to convert the idea of a book on the Poster into a tangible reality. The advice of Mr. Frank Pick and the co-operation of his associate Mr. Ivor Fraser, have been of great assistance to me both now and heretofore. Many of the illustrations in this book belong to the collections in the British Museum. Mr. Ceci of the Print Room has aided me courteously and constantly in my researches. Mr. Lowe has given up to me more of his time than I can thank him for in assisting me in matters peculiar to the making of a book ; and to Mr. Colin Hurry I owe a happy memory of discussions bearing upon this book which were stimulating and suggestive. For a practical and greatly valued assistance I have to thank Mr. Harold Monro and M. V. D.

E. McKNIGHT KAUFFER

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CABINET DES ESTAMPES



BANKS COLLECTION, 1792 BRITISH MUSEUM

I. ORIGIN AND EVOLUTION

MEN have always been anxious to attract public attention by some means to their particular trade or particular way of producing goods. The potters were afraid that passers-by, although in need of crockery, might not notice that crockery was to be got there; the priests were anxious that the worshippers should not go to the other temple; the innkeeper feared that somebody, not realising that he had an ample supply of drinks, might go to the inn next door. In short, the necessity for advertisement seems to be as old as humanity itself.

One of the first manifestations of this is the signboard. The earliest signboards we know of were in ancient Egypt. In Greece they were, apparently, in more general use, while in Rome different trades had already adopted definite symbols, as, for instance, that of a bush which was exhibited in front of places where wine was sold. The use of signboards became widespread, and by the seventeenth century they had become so numerous and elaborate that, in 1669, Louis XIV issued a royal order regulating their sizes and placing, while Louis XV, in 1761, issued another, by which signboards were allowed to be hung only if fixed flat against the wall. Somewhat similar steps were taken in London also about the same time. Apparently the signboards then in use, like our posters, were an attraction, but in addition were a great nuisance to the traffic and actually a danger to the public. Heavy, richly

decorated posts, with the beautiful wrought-iron work which can still be seen in our museums, frequently fell over, with unpleasant consequences for the passers-by. How numerous they were one can judge by the fact that they were used by *every trade and profession to attract public attention*, and it is this particular purpose that determined the artistic conception and execution of old signboards. Thus we find, as a rule, that the painter's efforts were directed at reducing the subject of a sign to the most elementary and striking shapes. Then, by the use of various means, which we shall discuss presently in connection with poster-designing, he made its appeal to the public as strong as possible.

Thus the universal use of signboards, their purpose and artistic conception and execution, make it evident that they were in reality posters at a stage when there was no need for advertisement on such a large scale as at the present time, when competition and mass-production make it necessary for the producer to come into contact with as large a number as possible of prospective customers. In short, the history of signboards is the greater part of the history of posters. For, after all, the poster is nothing else but a signboard which is reproduced in large numbers and distributed, instead of the original alone being hung in front of the manufacturer's premises. This becomes quite clear from the fact that posters only began after signboards had gone out of general use. So, instead of making the history of the poster begin with Lalance's poster for the book " Comment meurent les femmes " (1836), in my opinion it is more reasonable to take it as a continuation—in a new form—of signboards. In any case, there are in England examples of the posters used before that time, namely, the posters used by London rag and bone merchants in the eighteenth century, one of which is reproduced in this book. It is not the aim of this introduction to deal with the history of poster-painting, which would necessitate recording a great many names in various countries and classifying the work done, so I will proceed to discuss its object.

The necessity in modern life of appealing to the general public in an effective way, so that they are not only given certain information about the goods or ideas advertised, but also, to a certain extent, put into a favourable mood towards these goods or ideas, gives an extraordinary prominence to the poster. In certain cases, even the press, in spite of its being one of the greatest advertising means, is not quite adequate if it relies on printed words alone. The result of this is that we find in the newspapers arrangements to give important advertisements special prominence which are in reality nothing but miniature posters. To be affected by written advertisement implies firstly, to have it under one's eye ; secondly, finding the particulars which might be of interest ; and thirdly, spending time in reading it. In fact, there is no means of forcing the public to read a written advertisement, and much less is there any chance of appealing, through printed words alone, to all the faculties which must be excited in order to bring people into the



FRANCE, 1836 LALANCE

right mood for buying a new product just placed on the market, or accepting a certain idea. Here is where the importance of the poster comes in. There is no expense to the public and, therefore, it is more accessible to the public than any newspaper ; there is no loss of time involved in looking at a poster. Finally, in reading one receives ideas by reading word by word and then analysing the contents, while in looking at a good poster the process is entirely different. The spectator gets at once a complete impression, his interest becomes excited and, before he has time to find out whether the goods or ideas advertised are of any use to him, he is in a mood which at least is not indifferent to them. In a very short time, almost instantaneously, he is not only told the principal virtues of the matter advertised, but also he has been entertained. His eyes, while enjoying the design and colouring, are sending messages to all his other faculties and, without exercising any effort, he receives without criticism, through all his faculties simultaneously, all the communications that he was intended to get. Even when the spectator is struck unpleasantly by a poster, his criticism is confined to the poster alone, his curses to the artist who designed it and his indignation to the man who could employ such an artist and, just for that very reason, he will not forget the goods advertised. Human beings, unless blind, cannot help noticing interesting and impressive shapes, and if one looks backwards to his own

childhood, it is quickly found that the clearest recollections are those of shapes, especially brightly coloured ones. In this fact lies the twofold importance of the poster; firstly, one cannot help noticing it; and secondly, provided a poster is striking enough, one cannot easily forget it.

The importance of the interest which human beings take in shapes, and of the reactions which certain shapes provoke in them was realised a long time ago, and in our times it is recognised to such an extent that the public is appealed to through the poster, not only in trade but in all fields of activity. It is sufficient to enumerate such examples as political propaganda, government propaganda (of which there was great use in all countries during the last war), educational propaganda, means of communication, etc. It is easy to realise the importance of political propaganda posters by studying the events during the last few years in Russia and Germany. The two countries used the same means for exactly opposite purposes: *i.e.*, Russia used posters on a large scale to popularise Communism, and Germany used posters to fight it. In both cases they proved to be an important weapon when in able hands.

The very diversity of purposes for which posters are used makes it difficult not only for the employer but for the artist himself to arrive at a clear conception of one. For it is not sufficient to know how to draw and paint from nature to produce a satisfactory poster. A much more important factor, an understanding of the ultimate function of a poster, is very often forgotten, both by the advertiser and the artist. The difficulty of the advertiser lies in his not being well enough acquainted with the kingdom of shapes, nor having the necessary quality of imagination to interlace those shapes which he knows into a combination satisfactory both with regard to the artistic requirements and to the desired effect. An artist's difficulty is chiefly in the fact that he has to create, through his work, a certain impression which was defined beforehand by somebody else. This difficulty is formidable for those who are not poster-designers, but for a poster-designer to overcome it is one of his principal gifts, and should not present any special effort provided that he has a clear understanding of the function of poster-art in general. A look through the old signboards and some of the contemporary posters, which follow the same course, will show sufficiently clearly that the origin of poster is in the fact that human beings are impressed by shapes. Different shapes, of course, give different impressions. A characteristic of old signboards and effective posters is simplicity and quaintness of general shape—composition—and also of detail. The simplicity and quaintness are not the result of bad craftsmanship—in fact, quite the reverse—for it is as easy to paint a lion its natural colour as to paint it red. But a red lion strikes the human eye as unusual, even in those parts where lions are never seen, and the passer-by cannot help noticing it. The less this lion is like our own idea of a lion (retaining at the same time the principal visual characteristics of a lion) the more curiosity it will excite in us, and consequently the longer we shall remember it. If this lion is designed in such a way as to make its quaintness

inoffensive, then the effect on the spectator is a double one. He experiences an æsthetic pleasure, and at the same time is shocked by the unexpectedness of the shape and colours in front of him.* It is this combination of æsthetic pleasure and unexpectedness or shock which makes him stop to look at it in preference to anything else, and inquire what the sign stands for. A similar experience takes place while looking at some quite recent posters. In fact, the red lion which usually is seen adorning the entrance of some country inns has no special connection with the goods sold there, yet when it was first invented it must have proved an excellent means of attracting customers. The proof ?—the number of similar signs used all over the country even to-day. Any number of examples can be found which will illustrate this fact. If we admit that the chief function of a poster is to attract attention to certain matter, and by presenting the cause of attraction in an artistic form to produce in the spectator a mood favourable to the object of advertisement, it becomes obvious how little necessity there is for imitation of nature ; in fact, experience teaches us that the further from imitation the more impressed we are. Of course, it depends entirely on the ability of the artist and his choice and combination of shapes, as well as his insight into public psychology, how far he can neglect " the reality " for the sake of effect. Such results have already been achieved, so that it is difficult to imagine any limit—as to reality—beyond which an able poster-designer could not go. It is neglect of these important psychological and artistic factors that has introduced imitation and flooded the world with posters which neither serve their purpose nor satisfy the most elementary requirements of art.

Among the posters which do satisfy certain artistic requirements, a great many are in reality conceived as pure painting,† and only used afterwards as posters. Without discussing the merits or faults of such paintings, although it is necessary to mention that as a rule they are very bad, it ought to be clear that they cannot possibly efficiently serve the purpose for which they are meant. A painting can no more substitute a poster than a poster can a painting. They use similar mediums and means, but the difference of their ultimate function is so great that the colour, as well as design, must be used differently, and consequently its conception itself is different. This makes poster-designing an entirely separate branch of art which possesses its own laws and purposes.

Composition in painting is isolation of a certain part of the visible world, and giving it a definite shape, so that the part of space taken acquires the properties of space in general. Design is the application of a ratio, derived from the shape given to the space enclosed, to all the objects in the painting, and by determining their spacial value arriving at a satisfactory distribution of masses. Thus painting is the application of universal ratios to a chosen

* See plate facing page 20.

† " Pure painting " is used for want of a better expression, which would define clearly the difference between painting and poster-painting.

object or objects ; in other words, it is the intensification of primordial ratios. The result of this is that every great painting is self-contained and not communicative in any definite way. Our pleasure or discomfort from it is solely the result of the way in which the ratio has been carried through. It is the mystery of expressing by different coloured planes the eternal invisible laws of creation that makes a painting great. But the more it expresses of this the less the painting communicates to our common sense and the more it impresses us with a feeling of profound mystery which, though experienced, is hardly expressible. However, a great quality this may be in a painting, it is by no means desirable in a poster. A poster has not to express the mystery of creation but to attract attention, the only mystery being in the way in which the artist achieves it. While a painting is entirely self-contained and without any other purpose but to arrange a succession of shapes subject to an established ratio (in other words, its principal tendency is inwards), the poster has a dual tendency, one inwards and the other outwards. Neither of these two tendencies alone will give the desired effect. Its inward tendency is in the composition and design, and its outward tendency consists in the necessity of an appeal which—although provoked by artistic means—is not principally æsthetic. Let us discuss first the spacing composition and design of a poster.

Old wisdom teaches that it is impossible to realise space except in the form of a geometrical solid, and almost as long as mankind can remember the cube stood for the universe, and the tetrahedron, or occasionally the pyramid, built inside that cube for its material part. The tetrahedron built inside the cube has for the sides of its four equilateral triangles the diagonals of the sides of the cube ; the pyramid has for its base one side of the cube, and is of the same height as the cube. Both the tetrahedron and the pyramid, built in this manner, are exactly one-third of the volume of the cube. Scientific criticism of this particular conception of the universe and its subdivisions does not concern us, our interest lying solely in the fact that this conception of space is the only one possible in the art of painting. This is especially clear if one keeps in mind that the majority of the spaces at an artist's disposal are quadrangular. This principle, *i.e.*, the conception of space as a cube, was always strictly applied both to pure and decorative painting, including ornaments, right up to the present age, when it ceased to be used except by Cézanne. Thus the ratio between the third dimension and the two given ones is the primary factor in the definition of the space within which the artist is working. The necessity for graphic definition of the third dimension becomes still more evident if we pay sufficient attention to the fact that every shape and every colour has its own place on the plane of recession, as will be pointed out later. Once the third dimension has been determined, the ratio between it and the two given dimensions originates the proportions of all the other shapes, for every shape placed in a given space belongs to it organically, only inasmuch as its inner ratio is identical with the ratio of the whole. In short spacing in painting or poster-designing must be analogous



JAPAN, SESSHÛ, 1420-1506 NAGOYA-TOKUGAWA

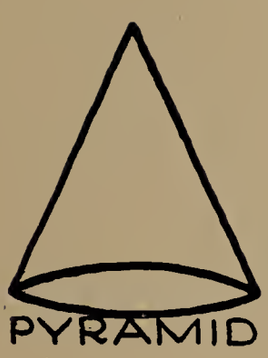
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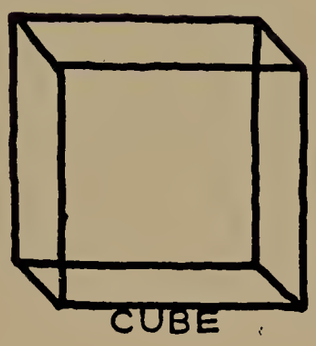
to the universe itself, *i.e., it must have one underlying law which will keep every shape in its proper place.**

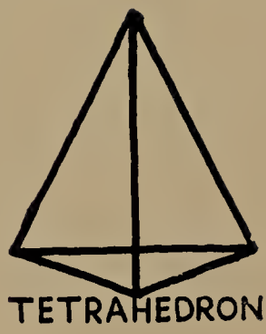
Thus once the space has been defined and the unit of measurement been derived from it, the necessity arises for co-ordination of all the shapes used in order that their respective proportions can be clearly determined and they themselves put in a proper relation to the space. This is the function of composition. Composition can be carried out either by giving a common form to all the shapes used or by arranging them in a numerical equivalent of the geometrical ratio ruling the space. In the first case, the dimensions of the form must be derived from the space for quite obvious reasons, for the shape of the composition has to be placed in that space in such a way that it becomes not only an organic part of it, but also emphasises a definite and unique conception. At the first glance it appears too dogmatic to make any definite rule about space and composition, but experience shows that this law is capable of so many variations that it simply acts as a starting point. The failure of contemporary art, both academic and advanced, lies in refusing to understand this geometrical principle and in trying to substitute for it an unknown and uncontrollable factor, such as their own emotions or their own eyes alone. Quite a slight study of art in the past—if properly directed—reveals what an enormous number of variations can be made on even one single principle, for example, that of the mean and extreme ratio. This is the law which in its geometrical form underlies the Pyramids, Assyrian reliefs, Pheidias' sculpture, Chinese and Byzantine painting, the works of Giotto, Raphael, Leonardo, Titian, Tintoretto, El Greco and Cézanne, not to mention the ornaments and decorative painting—in fact the greater part of the real works of art in existence.

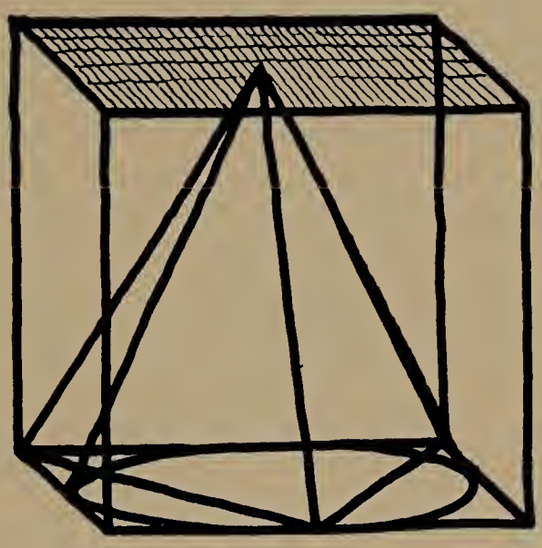
There is no difficulty in realising the inconvenience of placing, say, a pyramid on the canvas without having any idea of the depth of the space in which it has to stand, nor need of emphasising the fact that guessing is neither knowledge nor art. This knowledge is an equal necessity to both artist-painter and poster-designer, to the first in order to be able to harness his emotions and give them a definite and *self-centred* form, and to the latter in order to know where *to break the rule* and in that way to give and emphasise the necessary shock. In the invention of the *shape* for the composition we find the real test of a designer, and on it depends the success of his poster. A glance at the posters shows us that the chief difficulty lies here. In fact, either this difficulty or ignorance leads many poster-designers to illustrate literally the captions, although to be fair to the artist, one must mention also that some advertisers not only favour but insist on this practice. The most obvious examples of this are cinema posters, the majority of which attempt to attract public attention not by an artistic combination of shapes, but by trying to give an idea of the drama or comedy, by the impossible means of picking out one single incident and presenting it it a way which is unbearable

* A detailed account of this theory will be found in my writings elsewhere.


PYRAMID


CUBE


TETRAHEDRON

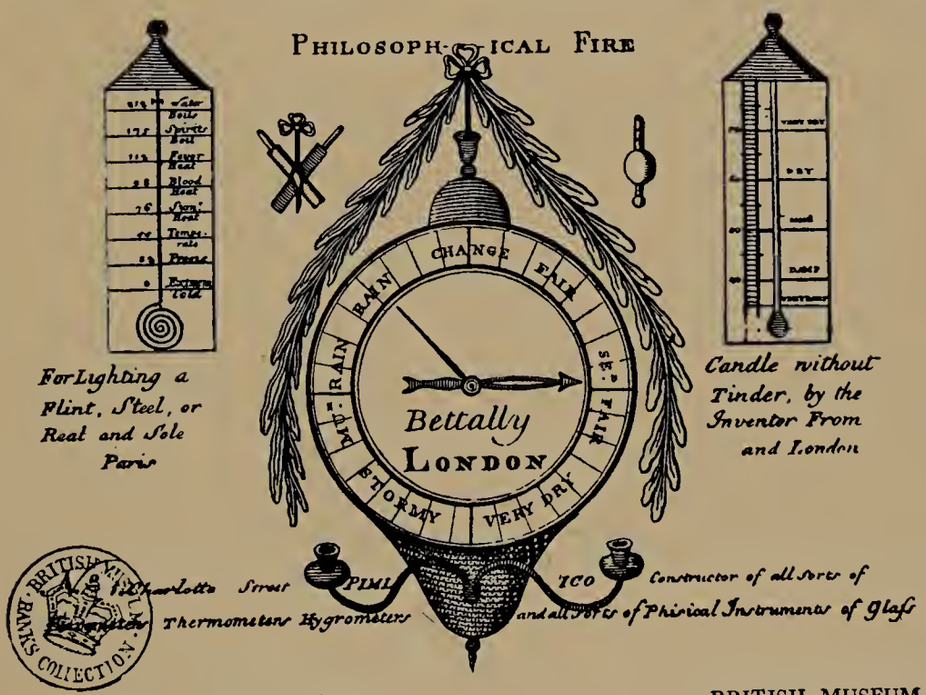




BANKS COLLECTION, 1792 BRITISH MUSEUM

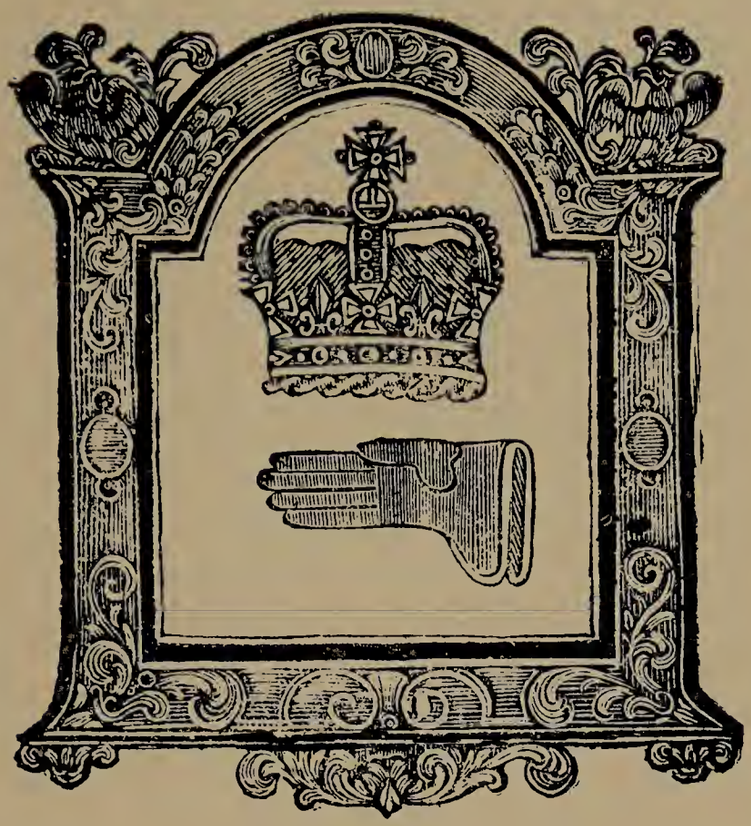
to any sensitive eye. Even if it were desirable to appeal to the lowest human sensations, it is possible to do it in a much more effective and yet less crude way through an artistic form. Is there any necessity for insisting on the fact that every form of expression is not an artistic form ? The present cinema posters, in my opinion, are very often an equivalent to the use of foul language. Foul language may be legitimate in some circles, but it is certainly neither useful nor tolerable in public places, where the majority of the people present may not be keen on that kind of entertainment.

Just as the function of composition is to give a body common to all the



BANKS COLLECTION, 1787 BRITISH MUSEUM

shapes, so is the function of design to give to that body both life and a specific meaning. By arranging the shapes inside the shape of the composition in different groups, and by interlacing them in different patterns, while preserving the original ratio, every single shape obtains a specific function determined by its relationship to other shapes, to the pattern of the design, to the shape of the composition and to the whole work. There is hardly any necessity to insist on the importance of the function of every single shape in a poster or a painting. A glance at nature will show us this clearly, if we care to look for reasons why the things we see have the forms they have. Observation of objects made by man, especially articles of practical every-day use, will show us strikingly the significance of shapes, *i.e.*, there is an obvious reason why wheels are circular and why they are not on the top of the cart. It is this very thing that is almost always forgotten by the poster-designer as well as painter. Just as in every-day articles some shapes are necessitated by their use so in a design every shape must be given a function which is in sympathy with the essential characteristics and which *will make its presence inevitable*, as well as helping to produce the psychological effect desired. For the distribution of shapes in this manner not only gives an æsthetic and logical basis to the structure, but also creates in the whole an inner life which alone can communicate efficiently a definite message. This message, unluckily, is not in the hands of the poster-designer ; as we said above, it is given to him and he has to transmit it as best he can. It is this particular factor which at the same time hinders and helps a poster-designer. The hindrance is in the fact that he has to make a compromise between his own opinion and craft and somebody else's needs, but on the other hand he is helped by this same fact, which makes him able to put greater reliance on psychological effect than in painting. For to provoke curiosity or attract attention is a somewhat easier task than to create a self-centred whole. The necessity for shock gives the poster-designer the right to neglect in his pattern all the intermediary details and to mark only such elements as he finds necessary. In such a case the leaving out of detail is as important as the underlining of essentials, for the interval between two stages plays as big a *rôle* in the general effect as the shapes themselves. In fact, this not only helps the designer to express the message more directly, but also gives him an opportunity to practise economy and so make his design simple and attractive. This facility is one of the chief characteristics of poster-designing. How important simplicity is can be easily realised when the necessity of introducing lettering into the design is remembered. If lettering does not carry on the essential character of the whole not only is it not effective—in other words, misses its appeal—but it spoils the whole poster, and to be able to preserve the whole and yet introduce successfully the lettering, which must essentially be an ornament, the whole design absolutely must be treated in simple shapes forming a strong and definite pattern. The absurd results of a different practice can be seen from an Italian poster advertising a

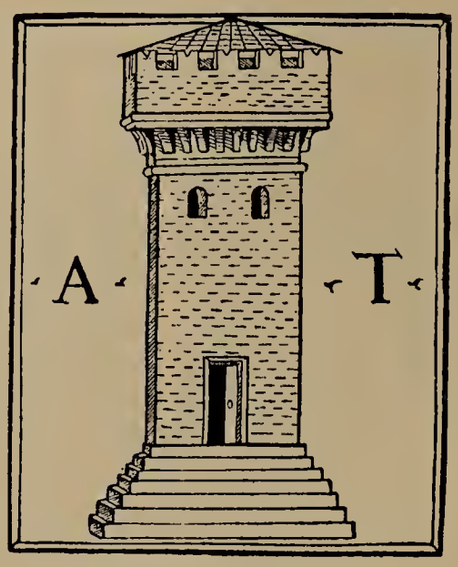


CHARLES SMITH,

At the Crown *and* Glove, *near*
Bow-Church, CHEAPSIDE,
LONDON,

SELLS Men's and Women's Bath Lamb-Gloves, and Mittins; and all other Sorts of Gloves, at Reaſonable Rates.

18TH CENTURY LONDON MUSEUM



A SYMMETRICAL DESIGN WITH A PYRAMIDAL SUGGESTION WHICH IS CROSSED OPTICALLY BY THE LETTERS "A" AND "T," THUS ACCENTING THE PEAK, AND SUGGESTING AN ARROW-HEAD AS A WHOLE

well-known mineral water called Gioconda. The poster consists of a photograph of Leonardo's *Gioconda*, with the inscription in plain lettering, " Gioconda aqua purgativa." The effect of this need not be described.

Every shape in nature, beginning with the earth itself, has a definite geometrical basis. In some cases, that of minerals for example, this is quite obvious ; with others, such as plants, it is less marked ; while in the case of the more highly developed animals, the variations are so great that a careful study is necessary in order to be able to define the basic shape exactly. For our purposes plants will afford a clear enough example, both of the importance of the geometrical basis of all shapes and of the logic of their combinations. Take, for instance, a sycamore tree. Even a superficial study will disclose the fact that the curve of its crown can be easily found by geometrical means. Taking the distance between the extreme point of the lowest fully-developed branch and the middle of the thickness of the trunk as a radius, the size of the lower and bigger part of the crown can be easily determined, the side most exposed to the sun and most sheltered from the wind coinciding almost exactly with the curve. After finding this, another curve should be described from the middle of the curve already obtained, with a radius equal to the difference of the minor and major sections of the mean and extreme ratio of the whole height of the tree. In this case also the side most exposed to the sun and preserved from the wind coincides with the curve. The other side can be easily obtained by correction or by drawing curves with radii derived from that side. The figure thus obtained will show that a vertical section of a sycamore has the same shape as the leaf. A little further observation in this matter reveals the law that in fact every single branch also derives

its shape from the leaf, and that the grouping of branches follows from the shape of the leaf, which is composed of three lobes. There is hardly any necessity for me to point out the geometrical characteristics of leaves ; in fact, I am saying nothing new when stating that every possible shape is only one of the transition stages between a triangle and an ellipse, and every three-dimensional form comes between a tetrahedron and a sphere. At present it will be sufficient to deal with a few primary shapes, such as the triangle, the square, the hexagon, etc.

One of the most important of features of a design is balance. In early times this was achieved by symmetrical arrangement, but very soon men learned to realise it by using different shapes of the same area, or even, if necessary, by balancing one single shape with many others whose total area is equivalent to that of the first. How much importance mankind gave to the transmutation of shapes into others of the same area can be imagined if one remembers what efforts were made to square the circle, while the use of these transmutations in design is shown in the abundant art-treasures of the past. Leaving aside the mystic and religious symbolism attached to different shapes, *e.g.*, the five Platonic solids, we will consider for the present only those of their characteristics which affect the eye alone. While saying " the eye alone," I do not mean to imply that *all* associations are excluded, but that, by only taking into consideration associations with *shapes* in nature, such as, for example, the association of a curve with the horizon, or the impression of volume given by the contrast between a curve and a straight line, which is again association with the distance and the sky, etc. If we observe an isosceles triangle during its transition into an equilateral triangle we cannot help noticing that the height changes simultaneously with the sides and angles, and that by the time all the sides have become equal the new triangle will appear to be somewhat smaller than the first, not only on account of its being shorter or narrower, as the case may be, but also because it is less prominent owing to the equal distribution of lengths and angles. In fact, by varying the height, the angles and the length of the sides, a number



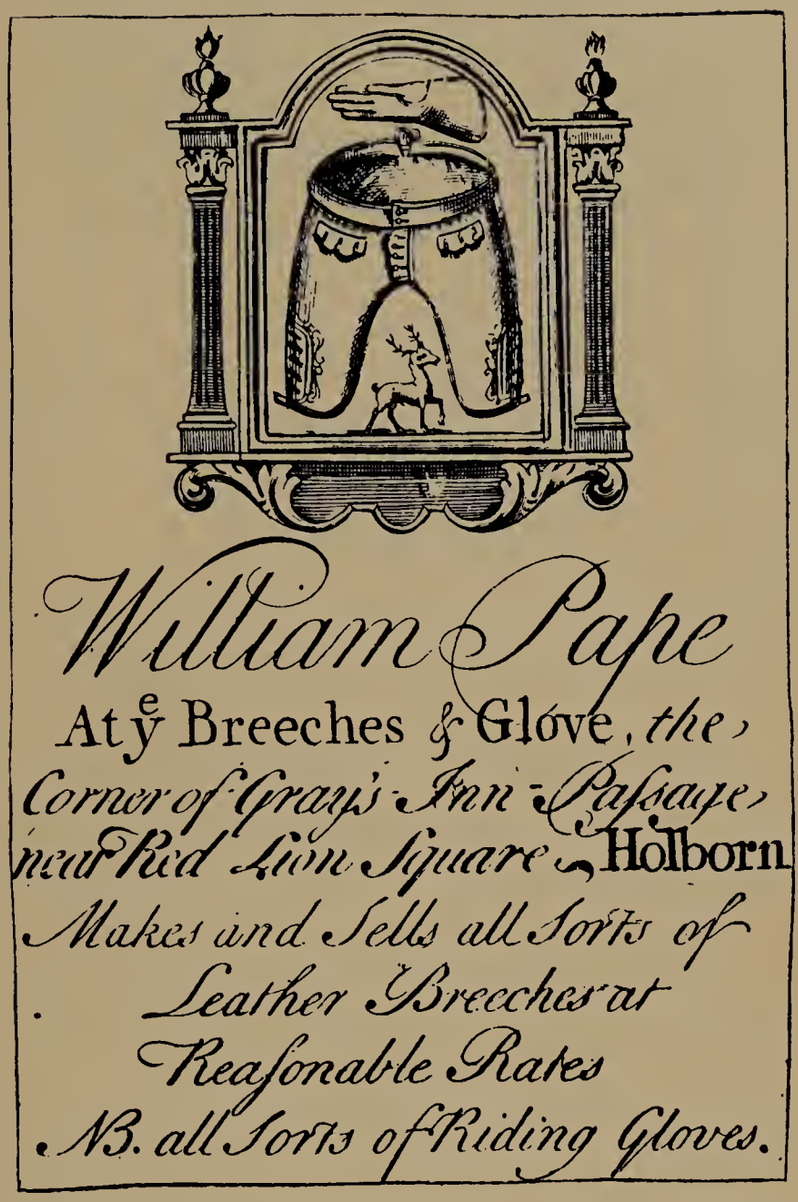
18TH CENTURY THEATRE TICKETS

SYMMETRICAL BALANCE WITHIN A CIRCLE

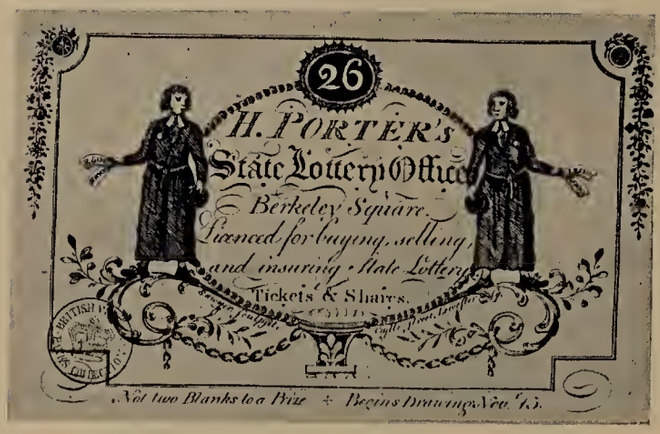


BANKS COLLECTION BRITISH MUSEUM

of different triangles could be obtained which, in spite of their having the same area, would appear to differ in sizes. We naturally associate this with the fact that objects appear smaller in the distance, and they seem to be on different planes of recession if the experiment is carried out under favourable conditions. Again, if we imagine the same equilateral triangle changing into a square, all three sides must become shorter in order to produce the fourth, and the height and the angles change also, with the result that the square will appear smaller still, and if the four sides of the square are again broken up into an infinite number of sides and so form a circle, one obtains a shape which appears to be smaller still, until in the end, by elongating the circle into an ellipse, we obtain a shape which appears to be smaller than any other shape of the same area. Thus by careful handling of shapes even ordinary perspective can be dispensed with by a designer in his pattern making, for, as is shown above, no two different shapes appear to be at an equal distance from the spectator. This will become more evident when we have considered the colouring. Taking the proposition above as granted, we can go a step further and say that all the shapes in a design are formed by the interlacing of different planes receding in different directions and at different angles. In such a case every shape is a part of one single solid built up of equivalent units. And it is this infinite possibility of variations of simple shapes that gives at the same time the feeling of movement and the satisfaction of a complete harmony. In fact, it is not by copying nature that we can create but by fighting her and wresting from her her secrets of creation. By discovering these a designer of talent can create his own laws, and the variations of shape in natural objects can teach us these secrets. I do not think it would be difficult to persuade



18TH CENTURY TRADE CARD LONDON MUSEUM



BANKS COLLECTION BRITISH MUSEUM

an artist of the exactness of these statements, for he would probably know them in one or the other way, but as far as the average advertiser is concerned, I dare not undertake a similar task, and after all another Sisyphus would be superfluous.

In painting, colour is a means of uniting forms by noting different tones or by replacing these tones by shades of local colour, while in poster-designing, colour lies emphasis on particular parts of the design in order to make it as prominent as possible. Of course this does not mean that a poster-designer is allowed to neglect harmony of colours, which is to him as important as to an artist-painter, the whole difference being in the fact that they use the same medium for different purposes. The poster having as its aim to attract attention, the use of colour is, naturally, modified to this specific purpose so that a poster-designer can use his palette in a much freer way than a painter. It is probably this liberty which accounts for the ignoring of the principal characteristics of colour by a great many contemporary poster-designers. The knowledge of the basic qualities of colour may help a designer to achieve great simplicity and even to allot to the shapes in his design the colour which belongs specifically to these shapes in that position. For there is certainly a strict analogy between shapes and colours, and if they are properly combined their effectiveness must increase. A poster-designer, who can use more frequently than a painter both shapes and colours in their unmodified or slightly changed state can make full use of this simple analogy without accepting any ready-made formula and without any hindrance to his personal conception of his art. In fact, he must have at his disposal a great accumulation of shapes, and their corresponding colours, which he can use at any time in all their variations. And he cannot use them without knowing their properties, for art is not guessing. I do not mean to imply that the only way to design a poster is to sit with compasses and ruler in hand and think hard which shapes correspond and which are their proper colours ; and merely accept without reserve the teaching of Lou-Tch'-Ai-Che, who said: " Some consider it noble to have a method ; others consider it noble not to

have a method. Not to have method is bad ; to stop entirely at method is worse still. One should at first observe rules severely, then change them in an intelligent way. The aim of possessing method is to seem finally as if one had no method." This is like KOU-TCH'-ANG-K'ANG'S method of letting colour drop : " The flowers bloomed at the movement of his hand."*

Science teaches us that difference of colour is nothing else but difference



18TH CENTURY TRADE CARD LONDON MUSEUM

in the character of the light received from the objects, and this is attributed to the difference of wave-length in the existing light. Thus to colour a shape means really to select the wave of the same length, and to disperse the others or to concentrate them elsewhere. This difference of wave-lengths is of special importance in the use of colour in design, as will be seen presently. If we compare any two colours we shall soon realise that they possess certain

* *Kiai-Tseu-Yuan Houatchoan*. Encyclopédie de la Peinture Chinoise. Traduction par Raphaël Petrucci, Paris.

qualities in a varying degree. For the moment we will consider one common to all of them, which is expansion into space. If we take three colours, red, yellow and blue, and compare their wave-lengths, we shall find that the *red* has the longest waves ; then comes yellow and lastly blue. Disregarding the spectral colours and turning our attention to colours in use by artists, the same rule holds good. Each of these three colours, mixed with white, will produce a certain number of shades, and if these shades are arranged in the order of their intensity, and in a straight ribbon, the darker part of it will appear to be receding. The same conclusion will be arrived at if the three colours mentioned are observed. Namely, the red will appear to be the nearest, the yellow next and the blue furthest. If one desired to bring the red and yellow on to the same plane of recession, it would be necessary to bring both colours towards each other, in other words, to add yellow to red and red to yellow until the desired result is reached, which will be a new colour—the intermediary orange. By bringing to the same point of recession yellow and blue, green is obtained, and so on. In other words, *no two colours can be on the same plane of recession without losing their identity*. This spacial quality of colour, added to the recessional qualities of shapes, makes clear the importance of the conception of space already mentioned. Thus, if we compare the three shapes mentioned as landmarks of recession namely : isosceles triangle, square and ellipse, their corresponding colours would be red, yellow and blue, and all the other shapes would correspond with the other intermediary colours and their shades. Of course this is only one example of primary and pure colours, and primary geometrical shapes in their simplest relationships without any influence from other shapes and colours, or from their place in a design, for these shapes, if used in a design will, naturally, be affected by other elements and their shape and colour correspondingly modified to an extent which is not possible to define beforehand. Here is where the artist comes in, for he alone can manipulate coloured shapes and forms in such a way that they flow in a design as smoothly as his own thoughts and feelings.

A painter usually chooses the colour-scheme which is most suitable to his purpose, and modifies it either to fit the structure of his painting or to accentuate the necessary characteristics of the objects painted. Whatever the case may be, his colour-scheme retains its principal characteristics through all his works, and counts as part of his artistic conception. With a poster-designer the case is different. The great use of posters in commercial life makes it necessary for a poster not only to be good artistically, but also to stand its own when placed close to large numbers of other posters which also are successful in attracting public attention. A successful poster gets its imitators as quickly as a successful painting ; the difference is that this increases the value of the painting, while the value of the poster is decreased—for the simple reason that there will be too many of the same kind. A poster must be unique, and colour is one of the most suitable means of achieving





Partridge and Iliff's
WAGGONS

SET out from the BELL Inn in *Friday-Street*, LONDON, almoſt every Day, and Carry Goods and Paſſengers to the Places under mentioned:

FALMOUTH, and all Parts of CORNWALL;

PLYMOUTH,
EXON,
HONITON,
AXMINSTER,
} and all Parts of DEVON;

CHARMOUTH,
BRIDPORT
BROADWINSOR,
BEAMINSTER,
DORCHESTER,
POOL,
WINBURN,
WAREHAM, and
BLANDFORD,
} and to all Places adjacent.

They call at the *White Bear* and *New White Horſe Cellar* in *Piccadilly*, going out and coming in.

BANKS COLLECTION BRITISH MUSEUM

this. This practical necessity prevents the poster-artist from settling on a fixed colour-scheme ; in fact, it makes it almost imperative to him to choose a new one for every new poster. Luckily, the wide range of colours and enormous number of combinations make this task possible for an experienced poster-designer. An idea of the number of different arrangements possible can be formed from the following calculation. If we take four colours and try to contrast them with each other without mixing them, either with white or with each other, we shall find that there are :

12 arrangements of four colours at a time
24 ,, ,, three ,, ,,
12 ,, ,, two ,, ,,

These colours, when mixed in different orders and proportions, and graded in all possible shades, would produce, for all practical purposes, an infinite number of arrangements, from which an artist could choose those which serve the requirements of his design. The choice of colours is made principally with the object of making the poster conspicuous, and, therefore, the actual colour of the object from which the shapes on the poster are derived is frequently of no importance, as can be clearly seen from the above-mentioned example of the red lion on the signboards.

Mankind quickly became aware of the functions of colour in nature, and made continuous efforts to apply them in one or the other way to different purposes of daily life. So far we have analysed only some of the geometrical and physical properties of shapes and colours which, if properly combined, are able to cause in the spectator any emotions that the designer may want to arouse ; but there are also other useful qualities which are worth a short discussion. The instability of colour in nature, and its psychological effect on us, is one of our principal sources of knowledge of how to command human emotions by means of coloured shapes. In fact, this instability is so pronounced in nature that any object, whatever its original colouring may be, can, under changed circumstances, acquire any colour, as can be easily realised by observing a river, whose waters in twenty-four hours pass through all shades from glaring white to indigo blue. The different moods produced in man by the change of colour in different lights emphasise not only the fact that certain colours correspond to certain emotions, but also the possibility of using an analogous method in expressing these emotions. If one thinks of all the variations of colour in the course of a single day and night, not to mention the changes caused by the different seasons and the weather changes, there will be no difficulty in realising that there is a close connection between these changes and our emotions. Take, for instance, twilight, where every form is seen, as it were, through a darkened screen, and observe how the shapes merge into each other more and more as the night approaches until they form huge and mysterious masses. Then observe the same landscape under the different conditions of the day-time, and it will be easy to realise the fugitiveness of colour and of its effect on us. These effects are not of special importance to a painter, but to a poster-designer they may prove to be as important as to a poet ; not that he should attempt to describe in his work all the emotions caused by the change of surroundings ; but in order that he might be able to learn the emotional qualities of coloured shapes and use that knowledge in his poster to make his message more forcible. In fact, some colours are so closely associated with different moods that they have acquired through association both emotional and moral qualities, for example, black, or in certain countries white, has become a sign of mourning, red a symbol of joy, orange of intelligence, and purple or blue of nobility, etc. Beside this different colours also provoke associations with sensations of cold, warmth, weight, etc. We all know that red, orange or yellow seem warm because of association with the fire and the sun, and that blue and green give an impression of cold by reminding us of the sky, distant snow, water, etc., in the case of blue, whose predominance in green accounts for a similar sensation. Grey gives us a sensation of weight by association with metals, stone, etc. This association of grey colour with solidity and weight is partly responsible for the prevalent colour-scheme in some of the advanced movements in art. There are such numbers of these associations that there is no excuse for failure to find an appropriate colour-scheme for a design.



SHOP ADVERTISEMENT, 18TH CENTURY BANKS COLLECTION, BRITISH MUSEUM

The importance for a poster-designer of the associations provoked by different colours can only be fully appreciated after observing their influence on shapes. Although shapes do not actually change when differently coloured, they give different emotional impressions, and also take different places on the recession plane. Thus, objects painted in a similar colour to the background, will appear nearer to it than objects painted in a contrasting colour, and consequently they will be less visible, a phenomenon admirably illustrated by the protective colouring of animals. Forms by becoming less visible, merge into space and lose the precision and detail of their individuality, but acquire a new emotional quality. The impressiveness of some of these qualities has misled a great many painters who, for the sake of reproducing a mood, sacrifice the essential elements of a painting, as can be clearly seen in the works of such well-known contemporary artists as Dunoyer de Segonzac, Vlamink, the German and Russian Expressionists, and others, too many to be quoted. On the other hand, the same quality has been used to great advantage by such poster-designers as Lautrec, Steinlen, Pechstein, Gontcharova, McKnight Kauffer, and a few other artists working in the same field. These names alone are enough to show the great possibility of using

this property of colour in varied and entirely personal manners. It cannot be too often repeated that the function of colour in a poster is not actual denotation of nature, but to give to the shapes in the design, which may be even purely geometrical, the power of causing the suitable emotion. Knowledge of these facts will enable a poster-designer not only to give an original colouring to his poster, but also to have a large capital of coloured shapes which are available for use on any given occasion.

The part which association with our surroundings plays with colours is so great that the same shapes differently coloured will provoke entirely different associations. For example, if we paint two rows of isosceles triangles of equal sizes, one row blue and the other red, and place the red ones somewhat lower than the blue and over them, then by most people the red triangles will be associated with roofs and the blue with distant mountains. This association will mechanically place the red triangles very much nearer to the spectator, and consequently emphasise the recession of the blue ones. If we draw in the same way blue and white triangles, then the blue row will be associated with the nearest range of the distant mountains and the white row as snow-covered peaks. Thus narrow and pointed shapes, according to their colouring, may be taken for anything from a knife to a leaf. A round shape, by changing its colour, may represent in turn the sun, the moon, a hole, a fruit and a myriad of other objects. In short, human imagination in this respect is so vivid and association with the objects in nature so inevitable that a designer who is obliged to suggest in his poster a landscape or any other object from nature may use nothing but symbols very remote from actual representation, and yet by using the right colouring can effect any impression he desires. The advantage of doing this lies in the fact that mere pictorial description is too complicated to be an effective means of attracting public attention, and, on the other hand, however well done, is too far from reality to catch the charm of the real objects.

The use of symbols in a definite order and in accordance with the principles of spacing, composition and design, as has been already mentioned, tends towards an ornamental whole, and in my opinion ornament is the final stage of all decorative art, of which poster-designing is a branch, inasmuch as it has to observe analogous principles of spacing, composition and design, though differing inasmuch as its principal object is not decoration. The absolute necessity for simplicity of design, and consequently the great part which line plays in poster-designing, makes a tendency towards ornament inevitable. This is clearly manifested in some of the contemporary posters, although the majority of poster-designers unfortunately either are not yet conscious of this fact or copy unintelligently those who are. This is one of the reasons that one sees so many posters which are neither complex enough to be a painting nor simple enough to be a poster, in fact they remind me of some of those unsuccessful crossings between two species which are usually kept in museums in glass jars filled with methylated spirit. It may seem

somewhat cold to treat line last of all the elements in poster-designing, but as our chief interest is not in its being merely a border between two shapes but in its constructive qualities, which give it the important task of emphasising design and also local form and colour, it would be difficult to do otherwise. While in a drawing the caligraphic quality of a line is of great importance, in a poster this particular quality, although welcome at times, is by no means one of the chief concerns, the reason for this being that the capacity for attracting attention is of much greater importance for a poster than the intrinsic value of the line itself. In fact, line in the poster is on the one hand a kind of cement for the design, strengthening its construction by binding all the shapes together ; on the other hand it is the only factor which indicates definitely the direction of development of the pattern. By giving to the



BANKS COLLECTION, 1803 BRITISH MUSEUM

design a strong outline, one achieves two important objects : firstly, by inducing the eye in this manner to keep inside the design public attention is drawn to the principal features of the poster ; and secondly, if skilfully used it adds such a variety of effects that it atones for the necessary lack of detail in shades of colour and working out of form. In this way the poster acquires the look of a finished work, which adds to both its efficiency and its artistic merit. The very fact that a strong outline is used for emphasising the design implies that a similar means should be used if emphasis is needed for any of the details in the poster. The richness of linear pattern and the added emphasis on the local colour which can be achieved by skilfully outlining shapes, is finely illustrated by old stained glass windows, where the leading not only serves as a means of joining two adjacent shapes but also very often is the actual basis of the whole design. The importance of outlining local shapes and colours, as well as the whole design, was understood very early, and is quite a common feature in our posters. Its origin may be



either in coloured woodcuts or in signboards, but as its function was identical in both cases there is no need to assign it exclusively to one, although my inclination is to ascribe it to signboards.

Instead of discussing at great length the reasons for which all the elements in poster-designing were analysed, here I find it much better to quote the following Chinese principles,* equally valuable both to a painter and a poster-designer, as far as the artistic side of their work is concerned :

" THE SIX NECESSITIES "

Lieu Tao-Chouen of the Song dynasty said :
The revolution of the spirit (which germinates the movement of life) ought to be joined with force : the first necessity.
The lines and planes ought to be firm : second necessity.
The changes and the differences should conform to reason : third necessity.
The colours must be harmonious : fourth necessity.
The brush ought to go to and fro with ease : fifth necessity.
In imitating and studying, abandon everything that is bad : sixth necessity.

" THE SIX SUPERIORITIES "

To search in vigour for the movement of the brush : first superiority.
To work up talent in inability : second superiority.
To search for force in fineness and delicacy : third superiority.
To search for reason in lack of rule and singularity : fourth superiority.
Without ink to search for tone : fifth superiority.
In a flat painting to search for space : sixth superiority.

I cannot possibly summarise better the points I have raised, and as for the " spiritual qualities " which the Chinese call " Revolution of the spirit,

* *Kai-Tseu-Yuan Houatchouan.* Encyclopédie de la Peinture Chinoise, transl. by Raphaël Petrucci, page 16.



CHINESE STONE RELIEF

2ND CENTURY

(*From China, Vol. I, see bibliography.*)

germinating movement of life," I can only agree with their comment, *i.e.*, ... It is a Principle given by Heaven. Men cannot gain with effort this advantage : this is called the divine quality (*chen*).

The commercial usefulness of the poster often prevents one from realising the other, by no means negligible, part which it takes in our daily life. On arriving in an unknown town it is a casual glance at the poster hoardings which gives us a general idea of the life in that place, for the greatest number of posters will undoubtedly advertise the principal attraction of the town. Thus, if one goes to a holiday resort he will find the posters advertising very different objects than from those at Manchester, just as in any city in Russia now there will not be found any posters but those putting forward Communist ideas ; in short, the posters are, in this respect, one of the most accessible mirrors of the general trend of the public activities in a community. Another look at the posters will show us that this is not the only additional information they can supply. One poster will advertise the last word in fashion, another in engineering, the third the principal attraction of a museum, the fourth the beauty-spots of the place and surroundings. There does not seem to be anything extraordinary in this until one realises how many people acquire their first notions about things which do not come into their profession, by looking at a poster. For instance, who could get in a casual way an idea of the incredible size of the London traffic without looking at the posters advertising the underground ? How many people know practically everything necessary to a layman about the underground without having the slightest notion where and how they obtained their knowledge ? How many people only realise from looking at the posters that there is such a thing as modern and academic art ? How many passers-by who profess not to be interested in art discuss the design of a poster without dreaming that they have been lured into the field of art ? Or take a boy still too young to know much about anything. You will find if you ask him that he has learnt from the posters in a nick of time how heavy objects are lifted, how tunnels are bored, what different means of communication there are, what is the shortest way to America or the Continent, what face-cream he would like his mother to use, and besides all that a great many other things that his parents were not so anxious for him to know. It is this educational importance of the poster that seems to me to be recognised neither by the public nor by those interested in education, and the poster-designer is certainly not given any credit for it. The educational possibilities of coloured shapes have been recognised as far back as history can record. In fact, history itself in a great measure has been derived from the events recorded in sculptured or drawn shapes. Of course, I do not imply that the present-day posters are of the same importance for the future historian, but certainly the part they play in supplying information to a part of community about all the activities in contemporary life is a factor worth reckoning with. Besides this, the poster is instrumental in the education of general public taste to a much

greater extent than one might be inclined to suppose at first. In fact, posters are a reflection of the public taste to such an extent that they can be safely taken as a definite token of good or bad taste both of the advertiser and the public. Unfortunately, bad taste (I am not attributing here any moral meaning to this term) prevails, and very few advertisers realise that a bad poster reflects in the first place their own taste. The importance of this lies in the fact that the present-day posters are not only a factor in the formation of the taste of the contemporary public, but also have an equal influence on the taste of the coming generation. It is impossible to form the taste of the coming generation by sending them on free days to the National Gallery when the shapes met with in every-day life have as much influence as the old masters. The accumulation of coloured shapes which are mechanically assimilated from our surroundings is bound to manifest itself sometime and, of course, this manifestation will not be limited to the future poster alone. Consequently, just as some of the contemporary posters are influenced by contemporary art, so coming art will be influenced by the predominant note of our taste, whose most conspicuous mirror is the poster. There are obvious reasons for neglecting artistic qualities in objects produced *en masse*, but there is no excuse for neglecting them in the poster. Industrialism has been often blamed for the deterioration of public taste ; the poster is one of the means through which industrialism can improve it.

One could not possibly hope to give in a short review a complete idea of poster-designing, which has become not only a separate branch of art, but also definitely plays in our daily life a part for which it would be difficult to find a substitute. I am raising here just a few points which must not be ignored by anybody attempting to work out a definition of the poster, which is desirable for many artistic and commercial reasons. The fact that the poster has a distinct aim differing from pure and decorative painting—a difference getting more and more marked every day—means that there is no



CHINESE STONE RELIEF
(From China, Vol. I)

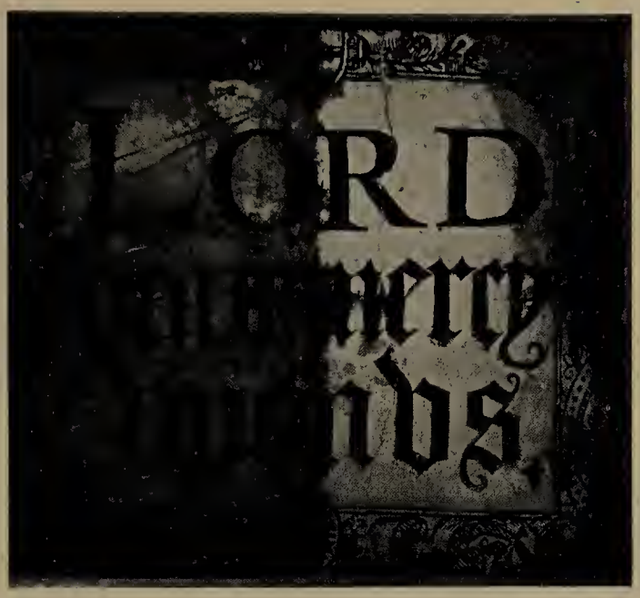
definite ground either for the definition of poster-art nor for the classification of posters by their merit. Is the merit of a poster purely psychological or purely artistic ? Or both ? How much of the effect of a poster is due to art and how much to other circumstances it is very difficult to say without extensive experiments with stages and colours. Unfortunately, at present I have neither the necessary space nor enough results from research to be able to work it out, so I limit myself to raising these few points in my introduction in the hope of making an advertiser realise that he is morally responsible when he chooses a poster, and also in hope that a poster-designer may realise that there is much more art in his work than he is usually credited with.

R. A. STEPHENS



DESIGN FOR A SHOP BILL, BRITISH MUSEUM — HOGARTH

PART TWO

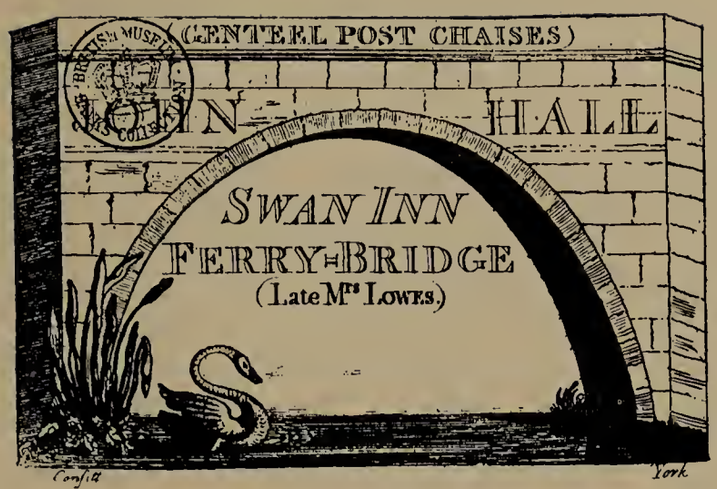


PLACARD USED DURING THE OUTBREAK OF TYPHUS
LONDON MUSEUM



FRANCE, 1845

GAVARNI



BANKS COLLECTION, 1749 BRITISH MUSEUM

II. PURPOSE

The Poster as a Selling Device

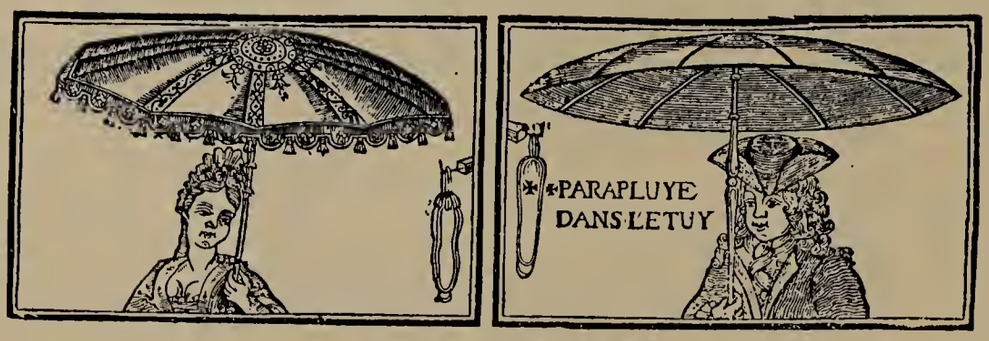
§ I

THE poster as a thing may be interesting to the artist as a conception or means of expression ; to the historian as a record ; to the collector as an object of beauty ; and to the public as a form or assemblage of colours ; but for the business man, who is a producer of commodities, it possesses only one interest : Does it sell his goods ?

We must therefore lay aside, for the moment, all other considerations with regard to the poster and deal with it, solely from the seller's viewpoint, as one of the many modern methods of advertising goods or services.

Assuming that a certain manufacturer is about to embark upon a marketing campaign, which is to distribute his commodities to the widest possible field of consumers, how can the poster help him and what place should the poster occupy in his advertising scheme ?

In the first place, he must keep in mind the fact that the poster is the oldest and simplest form of communication. It is the most ancient and the most understandable device for " spreading a message." Even the letters of the alphabet had their origin in pictures or symbolic representations which were, in essence, posters. The poster exists, then, for the purpose of communicating an idea or leaving the impression of a thought, in a simple and direct fashion. The manufacturer who is to sell his wares quickly and effectively must cause his message to influence two groups : *The Trade*, meaning the wholesalers and retailers, who act as channels of distribution ; and *the Public*, meaning the consumers, who must be attracted to the counters where the goods are sold. The outstanding value of the poster lies in this, that it



PARAPLUYES
ET PARASOLS
A PORTER DANS LA POCHE.

LES Parapluyes dont Mr Marius a trouvé le ſecret, ne peſent que 5. à 6. onces : ils ne tiennent pas plus de place qu'une petite Ecritoire, & n'embaraſſent point la poche ; ainſi chacun peut ſans s'incommoder en avoir un ſur ſoy par précaution contre le mauvais temps. Ils ſont cependant auſſi grands, plus ſolides, reſiſtent mieux aux grands vents, & ſe tendent auſſi vite que ceux qui ſonten uſage.

C'eſt le témoignage que Meſſieurs de l'Academie Royale des Sciences en ont rendu.

Cette nouvelle Invention a paru avoir été bien reçuë du Public par le grand debit qui s'en eſt fait, ce qui a excité l'Auteur à la perfectionner, au point qu'il ne laiſſe plus rie n à ſouhaiter du côté de la ſolidité.

A l'égard de ceux qui ſont ornez, l'on conviendra qu'il ne s'eſt encore rien vû en Paraſſols de plus agréable pour le goût & la legereté, & que l'on peut contenter en ce genre les Curieux les plus difficiles, pour la richeſſe des montures & des ornemens. *Ils auront tous ſa marque.*

Ils ſe font & ſe vendent à Paris chez Mr MARIUS, demeurant ruë des Foſſez Saint Germain, aux trois Entonnoirs.

Par l'autorité d'un Privilege du Roy, portant deffenſe par toute l'étenduë du Royaume de les contrefaire, à peine de mille livres d'amende.

Il ne faut pas confondre cet Invention avec celle des Parapluyes dont les branches ſe mettent dans une Sarbacanne. Ces ſortes de Parapluyes ont déplû par leur petiteſſe & leur peu de ſolidité ; d'ailleurs il falloit trop de temps pour les tendre.

De l'Imp. de J. C.

Permis d'imprimer & d'afficher.
Fait à Paris ce 25. Juin 1715.
M. R. de V. D'ARGENSON.

FRANCE, 1715

(*From M. Ernest Maindron's, Les Affiches illustrées*, 1886)



FROM "STREET CRIES OF LONDON"

occupies a strategic position between the home, where the goods are used, and the shop, where the goods are stored.

In this position the poster has its effect on the two great groups on which the seller's volume of trade depend. It is seen by the dealer, and thus influences him to stock the goods proclaimed ; and it is seen by the housewife, whose function it is to act as purchasing agent for her family, while her thoughts are on purchasing bent, and while she is in " the buying mood."

§ II

But there are other and no less important advantages in the free use of the poster as an advertising device.

(*a*) It presents the commodities to be sold in their correct form and colours. It is thus an effective and economical substitute for " sampling." This fact is of enormous importance to the purveyors of foods and fabrics, to inventors and designers, and not less so to " sellers of scenery," such as railways, resort proprietors, hotel keepers, estate agents and house builders. A separate chapter could be devoted to the influence of colour and combination of colour upon human emotions, appetites and desires. It has long been known, for example, that red, orange and purple are warm, rich colours which are exciting and provocative, whilst blue, green and grey are cool, static colours which are restful and restoring ; but suffice it to say that any competent poster artist can quickly choose those colours most suited to the article to be advertised.

(*b*) The poster likewise enables the goods *container* to be identified by and recognised by the prospective purchaser. Nowadays, when so many commodities are no longer marketed in bulk as formerly, but in packages, boxes, cartons, or bottles conforming to a standard pattern, shape, or colour, it is highly important that the manufacturer stamp these designs upon the memory of the public as deeply as possible. The same applies to Trade Marks, brand names and distinguishing symbols, which must be boldly and prominently illustrated if they are to be readily identifiable by the public eye.

(*c*) The poster greatly lightens the task of the salesman and traveller. It can be so designed as to indicate and illustrate the purpose and uses of an article with such clarity that the time necessary to be spent in exhibition and demonstration may be reduced to a minimum. Thus, when the salesman is brought face to face with his prospective customer, he finds the latter already informed, or already " half sold," and is able to proceed to the main point, viz., getting the order without wasting time on unnecessary preliminaries.

(*d*) The appeal of the poster is basic. Being, in its ideal form, simple in design and mostly pictorial, it may be understood of all men, and is able to direct its aim straight to the heart of some fundamental human emotion, without the intervention of argument or " the logical structure of reasoned thought." Thus it is a powerful lever in the task of the " mass selling " that has become necessary as a consequence of modern " mass production." It addresses itself to the instinct rather than to the reason, and so brings under its sway all ages, all types, and both sexes of the human race. To the man it says : " This will make you more prosperous, more important, more comfortable." To the woman it says : " This will lighten your housework or help your children." To the girl it says : " This will make you look prettier." To the child it says : " This tastes good." Love of success, love of home, love of attention, love of gratified appetite—these are some of the basic instincts, shared alike by the university professor and the street urchin, to which the poster can be effectively addressed.



§ III

Circumstances have made the poster peculiarly an urban product. That is to say, it is most useful in towns and cities. This fact fits in well with the purposes of the poster advertiser, who naturally wishes to make his display where the masses of the population are assembled most thickly. In the grey and somewhat dingy streets of modern cities the poster should be welcomed,



John Wigby

Nightman.

At the Black Bull opposite
Poland Street in Oxford Road,
LONDON.
Performs the above Business to the
Satisfaction of all Persons that employ
Him at Reasonable Rates.

18TH CENTURY TRADE CARD LONDON MUSEUM

if for no other reason as a foe of a monotony which otherwise would become depressing. A correctly designed and harmoniously executed poster is certainly a desirable screen for and cheering relief from bare and vacant lots, heaps of broken debris, and the straight, unbeautiful lines and faces of buildings which the brush of time and weather tends to change into a gaunt monotone.

In rural regions, unless planned and executed with due care for its position and surroundings, the poster is not so happy. Gross mistakes have been made by planting forcibly, as it were, in pleasing beauty spots certain advertising signs, misnamed posters, which obviously were designed for urban use only. The result has been a glare and crash of inharmonious lines and colours, which by affronting natural surroundings, have reacted unfavourably on the public's sense of fitness.

Those oil companies which sometime ago decided to remove from the English countryside those enamelled or painted signs which trespassed upon the natural beauty of the scenery, took a step which is bound to be applauded by all those who realise that a poster is most effective when in the right place, and when it has been designed and erected with due consideration for its surroundings.

The day will doubtless soon come when advertisers will exercise greater care in the choice of poster designs, and will select for rural use those which blend and harmonise best with nature's forms and colours, reserving for urban use those which compete best for public attention and interest amongst the modern town's varied attractions.

The poster advertiser who has this division of functions in mind will do well to call to his aid the most competent artists and the most competent printing and posting companies available. Once he has made his purpose plain, he may count upon their sympathy and co-operation.



19TH CENTURY

§ IV

Granted that an advertiser has determined upon his goal in the use of the poster, what kind of posters are best suited to his particular requirements ?

What criterion will aid him in selecting the most effective designs among the many which perhaps will be submitted to him ?

The poster, commercially considered, is an advertisement of a distinctive and peculiarly individual type, but is subject to the same principles which govern other good advertisements. That is, it must :

1. Attract attention.
2. Arouse interest.
3. Stimulate desire.
4. Lead to buying.

No one of these steps can be omitted without weakening the process which ends in conviction. Each phase must naturally lead into and be connected with the next. For example, to attract attention is one of the easiest feats in the world. The ringing of a bell, the setting off of an explosion, the splashing about of raw colour—any of these devices will attract attention, but no one of them will necessarily arouse genuine interest ; and so far from creating the kind of desire which results in a purchase, they are more likely to repel than otherwise. When we say, therefore, that a poster's primary task is to attract attention, it is understood that this attention must be *favourable ;* and favourable attention can be won from desirable customers only by the exercise of good taste and sound craftsmanship in poster work.

Laying aside other factors for the moment, the poster relies upon two means of attracting attention : Design and Colour. These twain are the great essentials. Neither can be ignored or sacrificed without harm to the other, and neither can make its best impressions without due aid from its companion. Another word for design is form. A picture is like a building or a piece of music ; it must have a base or starting-point, a development, and a culmination. It must also exhibit balance, or the proper arrangement and disposal of masses. As for colour, it is not necessarily synonymous with rainbow hue or tint. In poster art, both black and white count as colours, along with their intermediate, gray. If hues are wanted, they may be used sparingly or lavishly, as needs and costs dictate. The one necessity is that they be harmonious.

To obtain harmony among colours one must be aware that when placed in the same composition they tend to modify or strengthen each other. Moreover, they have a remarkable faculty for pairing with and offsetting each other. This is not the place to begin a dissertation upon a subject to which artists have given years of study without reaching the end of it, even if there were space ; but one need not be a profound student of colours and their relation to each other to know that the right choice of and arrangement of colours have a distinctly attractive and stimulative effect upon the eye and mind of the public, whilst the wrong choice has a repelling or depressing effect no less marked.

Suffice it to say for the present that what is desired in a poster is not the harsh artificiality of assorted aniline dyes accidentally juxtaposed within a disjointed framework, but the invigorating, gracious compositions such as nature carries out even in her humblest and most unpretentious manifestations.



QUEEN ELIZABETH'S BADGE
(*British Museum*)

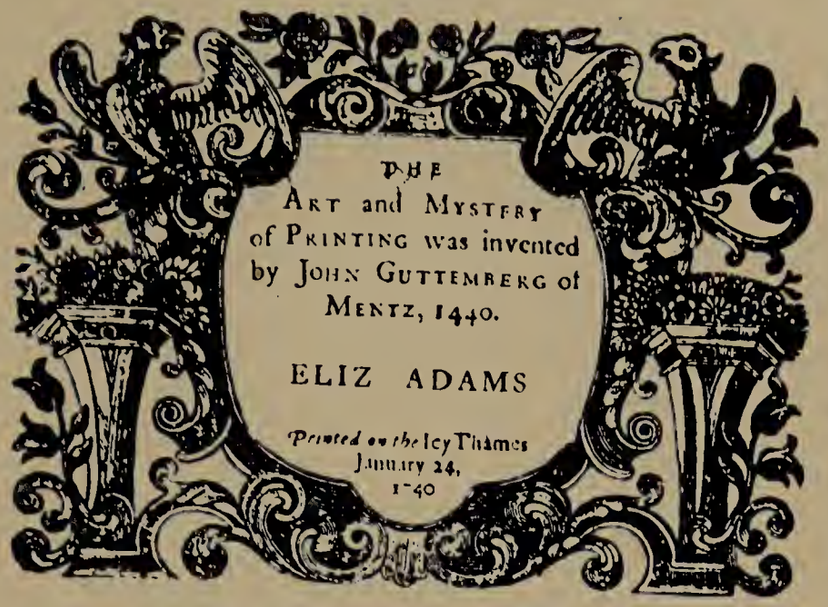
§ V

Granted that through its design and colour, a poster is reasonably sure of gaining attention, the next test is its capacity of arousing and holding interest. The interest that a poster possesses may be of two kinds, human or abstract. "Human interest," roughly speaking, involves the representation of persons and their various relations to each other. A picture representing mother and child, a pair of lovers, or men engaged in play or conflict, is said to possess " human interest." Posters of this description are narrative ; that is, they " tell a story."

Posters that tell a story have their uses, but poster art does not necessarily end there. In recent years it has become recognised that there is unsuspected power in the abstract conception ; in the design which omits " human interest " of a sentimental character altogether and relies solely upon the play and interplay of lines and masses which suggest forces rather than human character, and action rather than mere movement. In short, a gain may be made by reliance upon the *dynamic* rather than the merely romantic. This is a subject, however, which is more adequately dealt with in another part of this volume, hence we may pass on to the next step in the selling process.

§ VI

In general, the poster as an advertising device has three methods of creating the desire to possess which finally results in a purchase : by appealing to the emotions, by appealing to the senses, and by appealing to the ego. It



A DVICE *to the* Ladies.

Written and Printed on the THAMES.

Undique jam tergo ferratos ſuſtinet orbes,
Puppibus illa prius patulis, nunc hoſpita plauſtris.

YE Nymphs of *Thames!* attend the flowing Lay,
Not bound by Froſt, but Rhyme's compulſive Sway.
When *Virgil* liv'd, for *Amaryllis'* Love,
Her Name was ſeen inſcrib'd in ev'ry Grove.
But had the Poet in our Art been ſkill'd,
He had not left his Paſſion in the Field;
But to the fartheſt BRITONS led by Fame,
Had *printed* here *his* ECLOGUE, and *her* NAME.
Behold the Stream in icy Shackles held,
And ſnow-pil'd Heaps, where once the wide Wave ſwell'd.
Thus, when pale Death your beauteous Limbs invades,
And ſternly calls you to the ſilent Shades,
Your Breaſts will ceaſe to ſwell, your Cheeks to glow,
And Life's warm Sunſhine yield to Death's cold Snow.
Mean while reflect, nor, prodigal of Time,
Waſte in dull Doubt your quickly with'ring Prime.
Receive your Lover, claſp him in your Arms;
Deprive the cruel Tyrant of your Charms.
Soon will your Smile a gentle Heat inſpire,
And kindle freſh the Flames of dear Deſire.
But, ah! beware——nor let the chilling Froſt
Invade your Breaſt, as it congeals the Coaſt.
'Tis Love alone can chear the frozen Heart,
And in the dreary Winter Warmth impart.
Obey the Summons; fleeting Hours improve,
And *thaw* reluctant *Stoics* into Love.
Alas! ev'n now, I rue my fond Advice:
Beneath my Feet I feel the heaving Ice.
Quickly withdraw, and ſeek the ſolid Shore.
Hark!——underneath th' unruly Torrents roar,
Warm'd by your potent Charms, and glad to meet
The gentle Preſſure of your well-form'd Feet.
If Pity in your Boſom dwells, oh! ſave
The Bard's ſlight Manſion from the riſing Wave.
So ſhall he ever, hence, revere your Pow'r,
And love with Tranſport——when ſecure on Shore.

BROADSIDE, 1740 LONDON MUSEUM



DESIGN BY HOGARTH, 1798 BRITISH MUSEUM

might be said that any well conceived poster appeals to the emotions in some degree, but for the sake of discussion, it may promote clearness to make this division.

Emotions may be defined as those feelings and sentiments which are common to mankind wherever found. They are usually spoken of as pertaining to or proceeding from the " heart." Affection for one's home, one's offspring, one's native heath, and even one's dog—all these are well-nigh universal emotions which the poster may be legitimately aimed at, either directly or indirectly ; and so are affections' opposites, such as hatred, fear, disgust, contempt, etc. ; but this is ground which the poster is seldom called upon to tread. The reason is that in the advertising realm it has been found safer to be " positive " rather than " negative."

Common sense and observation show that it is better to stand *for* something rather than *against* something. This is particularly true of the poster, which could not hope to remain in the public view very long if it were too much given to inciting fears or creating depressions.

The senses lie nearer the surface than the emotions, and the poster that is intended to appeal merely to the former has a relatively light task to perform. It rarely does more than tickle the eye. Herein lies its danger ; the eye is easy to divert, but it has a short memory, and unless the organ of vision is used as a means to an end, and not an end in itself, the underlying emotions are not reached and the brief impression quickly fades.

This fact accounts for the failure to survive of many posters intended to be humorous. They cause a momentary smile or laugh, but are forgotten as soon as out of sight. Instead of being humorous or genuinely witty they are merely funny or comic. At their worst, they concentrate attention simply on their funniness ; the connection with the goods advertised is never revealed, or is feebly established. The result is that the advertiser finds himself paying out substantial sums for rather thin jokes which would be regarded as mediocre even in a comic journal.

The genuinely and fundamentally humorous poster is a prize almost beyond compare. Its value is almost illimitable. But it cannot be created or purchased at will. It is to be expected, accidents excepted, only from a seasoned artist who is not only a master of technique but a sagacious and sympathetic observer of human nature. The only safe course for a poster buyer who is at all doubtful as to whether the design before him is humorous or not, is to follow a certain celebrated bit of advice : " Don't." The genuine article rarely has to be argued about. It soon makes itself felt.

The poster that appeals to the ego is easily described. It affects the self-instinct that is so potent in all of us. It points out the way by which " I " may become more admired, more prosperous, more happy, more safe. The path to the successful poster of this description is plain, and yet often overlooked. The recipe is to put one's self, as an advertiser, in the prospective customer's place. That is, I must put aside for the moment my own attitude and point of view as a producer or distributor of goods and try to imagine or to learn those of the uninformed buyer.

This assumption of another ego, if faithfully carried out, will teach us many things. It will show us what is really important. It will compel us to forsake the general for the specific. It will prevent us from wasting space and good posters by announcing that " Mumpford's Motors Are Best " when the thing that the public really wants to know is how many miles such motors will run on a gallon of fuel.

§ VII

This brings us to a point upon which there hinges many discussions : How many words of text or letterpress should a poster contain ? There would be little ground for argument around this question were the difference between a poster and a printed announcement more completely understood. It should be made plain at the outset that, although both are advertisements and hence are akin, they may, and do, differ widely in nature and function.

An advertisement in a printed publication is meant to be *read*. A poster is meant to be *seen*. These two statements may seem obvious, and yet the fact that the two things are sometimes confused indicates that this obviousness is not fully recognised. There are further differences worth dwelling upon. The *sine qua non* of a poster is design. If it is to be effective, it must



BANKS COLLECTION, 1798 BRITISH MUSEUM

have form. A press advertisement, on the other hand, can be effective without form, except for that imposed upon it by the limitations of the page or column which contains it. Anyone can produce a press advertisement after a fashion, rough and imperfect though it be ; but it takes an artist to create a poster.

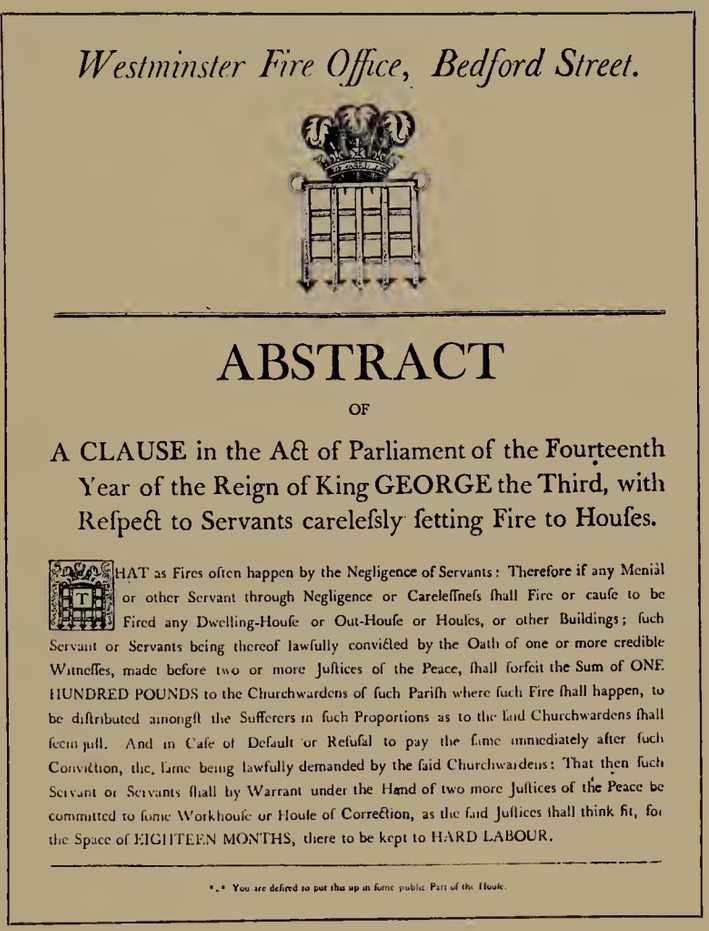
Again, the poster is not a coloured illustration, and has little in common with the drawings in line or wash which appear in popular publications. Both poster and illustration are " pictures," it is true, but there their likeness ends. A better comprehension of this fact would save many an advertiser both trouble and expense, and would considerably increase the returns from his advertising appropriation. It would also prevent the erection of the atrocities along our streets and highways which have sometimes given the more discerning portion of the public the impression that posters belong to the lowest form of advertising and of art.

An illustration for a press advertisement, if well executed, does what its name implies—it illustrates the accompanying text. It springs from the " copy " which delivers the " message " or divulges the " idea." The poster,

however, *is* the idea. It fails in its mission if it requires an array of words to explain or expound it. If it is really a lily, it requires very few words to gild it. In fact, very fine posters have been produced and used without any accompanying text at all. If, however, the advertiser feels that he cannot dispense with words altogether, he would be well advised to confine himself to the briefest possible " slogan " or phrase, except, of course, where special circumstances or special sites compel or enable him to use a much longer text.

The best poster is apt to be the simplest : strong and bold or delicate and suggestive, as one likes and as the subject demands ; but simple. One's object, then, in choosing as well as designing posters should be to see not how much can be put in but how much can be left out.

PHILLIPS RUSSELL



Westminster Fire Office, Bedford Street.

ABSTRACT

OF

A CLAUSE in the Act of Parliament of the Fourteenth Year of the Reign of King GEORGE the Third, with Reſpect to Servants careleſsly ſetting Fire to Houſes.

THAT as Fires often happen by the Negligence of Servants: Therefore if any Menial or other Servant through Negligence or Careleſſneſs ſhall Fire or cauſe to be Fired any Dwelling-Houſe or Out-Houſe or Houſes, or other Buildings; ſuch Servant or Servants being thereof lawfully convicted by the Oath of one or more credible Witneſſes, made before two or more Juſtices of the Peace, ſhall forfeit the Sum of ONE HUNDRED POUNDS to the Churchwardens of ſuch Pariſh where ſuch Fire ſhall happen, to be diſtributed amongſt the Sufferers in ſuch Proportions as to the ſaid Churchwardens ſhall ſeem juſt. And in Caſe of Default or Refuſal to pay the ſame immediately after ſuch Conviction, the ſame being lawfully demanded by the ſaid Churchwardens: That then ſuch Servant or Servants ſhall by Warrant under the Hand of two more Juſtices of the Peace be committed to ſome Workhouſe or Houſe of Correction, as the ſaid Juſtices ſhall think fit, for the Space of EIGHTEEN MONTHS, there to be kept to HARD LABOUR.

*** You are deſired to put this up in ſome public Part of the Houſe.

LONDON MUSEUM

THE MUSICAL LOUNGE,

AND

APOLLO CIRCULATING LIBRARIES,



AT

D. CORRI's,

MUSIC SELLER TO THE ROYAL FAMILY,

No. 28, HAY MARKET,

AND AT

T. JONES's, No. 23, Bishopsgate Street,

Where every SUBSCRIBER will be GRATUITOUSLY entitled to the full Amount of their Subscriptions in Printed Music, either at the Time of subscribing, or at any Period within the Term subscribed for, at the Option of the Subscriber, from the Catalogue published by CORRI or JONES.

And also be accommodated, at either of the above Houses, with Apartments, and Instruments of every Description, for the Purpose of trying Music.

In Addition to which, every Annual Subscriber will have free Admission to CORRI's Quarterly PRIVATE CONCERTS, at his Great Room, Hay-Market.

THE above Libraries will contain several Numbers of the most celebrated and extensive Selections of Ancient and Modern Works, both Vocal and Instrumental, in Print and Manuscript, which will be continually increasing, by the Addition of the most esteemed Compositions that may hereafter be published in every Part of Europe, on the following Terms, viz.

	£.	s.	d.		£.	s.	d.
For a Year - - - - - - - -	2	2	0	A Quarter - - - - - - -	1	1	0
Half a Year - - - - - - - -	1	11	6	Single Book, per Day - -	0	0	6

To be paid at the Time of subscribing at either of the above Libraries.

(SEE REGULATIONS THE OTHER SIDE.)

A Musical Journal will be published every MONDAY for the Voice, Piano Forte, Harp, Flute, Violin, and Tambourine, constructed on a Plan entirely new, by D. CORRI, (Price 1s. 6d.)

N.B. The Musical Academies for Voice, Piano Forte, &c. will be continued as usual, by Mr. and Mrs. CORRI, at the above Places.

Bretell & Bastie, Printers, 54, Great Windmill-Street, Hay-Market.

BANKS COLLECTION BRITISH MUSEUM

TWELFTH NIGHT.

Theatre Royal Drury Lane.

This preſent THURSDAY, June 5, 1794,

His Majeſty's Servants will perform a New Comedy, in Five Acts, called

The JEW.

The Characters by

Mr. BENSON,
Mr. WROUGHTON,
Mr. PALMER,
Mr. BANNISTER, Jun.
Mr. MADDOCKS, Mr. SUETT, Mr. BANKS.

Mrs. HOPKINS,
Miſs FARREN,
Mrs. BOOTH, Miſs TIDSWELL,

To which will be added (Sixth Time at this Theatre) a new Muſical Entertainment called

My Grandmother.

The Muſick compoſed by Mr. STORACE.

THE CHARACTERS BY

Mr. MADDOCKS, Mr. BANNISTER, Jun.
Mr. SEDGWICK, Mr. SUETT,
Mr. BENSON, Mr. BLAND, Mr. LYONS.
Mrs. BLAND, Signora STORACE.

Boxes 6s. Second Price 3s. Pit 3s. 6d. Second Price 2s. Gall. 2s.
Second Price 1s. Upper Gall. 1s Second Price 6d.

NO MONEY TO BE RETURNED.

Places for the Boxes to be taken of Mr. FOSBROOK, at the Office in Little Ruſſel-Street,
The Doors to be opened at Half after Five, and the performance begin at Half after Six.

Vivant Rex et Regina!

"MRS. SIDDONS."

To-morrow (being the laſt time of Mrs. Siddons' appearing this Seaſon) the Tragedy of DOUGLAS, with NO SONG NO SUPPER,
(being the laſt time of performing till the Holidays.) On Monday, the Comedy of The INCONSTANT, with, never
performed, aMuſical Romance, in Three Acts, called LODOISKA, with entirely new Dreſſes, Scenes and Decorations.
And on Tueſday, a Comedy, in Four Acts, called The NATURAL SON, revived and altered by the Author.

LONDON MUSEUM



Comparative Sources

The plate opposite illustrates a careful adherence to nature, but not without idealism. The coloured woodcut as a medium is closely allied to poster design because they both exact the minimum of means and can, if designed sensitively, give the maximum effect. Contemporary coloured woodcuts, like most of the posters, are bad for the reason that the example opposite is good. Simple design wherever applied demands invention. Anyone can fill a space badly, while only a few can do it well. To assemble a group of objects on a table is one thing, to interpret them and discover a design is another. The space surrounding the objects on the table is infinite, while the space into which they are to be translated is definitely circumscribed. To obtain greatness within smallness is not a quality given to every one, hence the rarity of artists.

The splendid interpretation represented in the woodcut opposite is due to the arrangement of its component parts as divined by the artist. The dark elliptical pattern of the leaf is the attracting element of the design, though this is enhanced by the descending "V" of light within which the principle objects are emphasized. The silhouette of the leaf gives the surface textures a greater richness because of the contrast. Contrast of pattern, contrast of line direction, and contrast of texture, these are the principles that have been incorporated into the best of past and present poster designs, particularly those inclined towards a more severe simplicity.



FROM A CHINESE WOODCUT 17TH CENTURY

(Reproduced by permission of The Marees-Society, Berlin)

What was said of the previous illustration applies equally well to the silk painting opposite with the exception that in this the formalism of the design as a whole is greater. The textural surfaces are more pronounced owing to the difference in medium. The branch which directs itself from the centre towards the lower left-hand corner breaks the otherwise complete symmetrical design. It can be accepted as one of the sources of a contemporary school of poster design.



CHINESE SILK PAINTING 13TH–14TH CENTURY

(From Die Kunst Ostasiens see bibliography)

The rather free line accented in thicks and thins is suggestive of the work designed with cut-out paper and the heavier lithographic line posters of Toulouse-Lautrec in France. These characteristics were carried on to a greater degree by the Beggarstaff Brothers, with cut paper, in England, during the eighteen-nineties. Compare this with illustrations on pages 93, 118, 120, and with the poster by James Pryde in colour section facing page 128.



DETAIL FROM A CHINESE STONE RELIEF IST CENTURY A.D.

(*From China, Vol.* I, *see bibliography*)

These two reproductions are, in spite of the sameness of medium, different in conception from the one preceding. The silhouette is dominant and maintains the unity of the decoration in pattern, while the engraved lines show a leaning towards heraldic design. Compare these reproductions with the following plate and with plates by Cooper and Martin, in colour section, facing page 144. See page 153.

Contemporary designers, particularly since Aubrey Beardsley, have echoed this tendency.





DETAILS FROM CHINESE STONE RELIEFS *CIRCA* 2ND CENTURY A.D.

(From China, Vol. I, see bibliography)

Distinctly heraldic in tendency and may be easily compared with numerous examples of present day designs.



CHINESE, TURKESTAN — 10TH CENTURY

(From the Stein collection, British Museum)

A trihedral composition moving towards the upper right-hand corner, with the direction emphasized by the curve running from extreme left hoof to extreme right, crossed by the curve running from the head of the rider down to the right back hoof. This curve is further emphasized by the right-angle line of the headgear and line of hair. The sharp lines and accented spotting of filled-in or shaded surfaces increase the activity of the composition as a whole. Compare with illustration, page 159.

Refer back to text, Part I. Origin and Evolution, pages 6 and 7.



JAPAN *CIRCA* 15TH CENTURY

The Japanese print has been an outstanding influence upon the poster since the late 1880's. The particular characteristics of this influence have been simplicity of composition, restricted use of colour, the importance of a predominant pattern, and contrast by isolation. See page 65. Lithography in the West has imitated technically the uses of the woodcut by Japanese designers.

In the eighteen-eighties Jules Chéret was the most conspicuous poster designer in Paris (see poster by Chéret, section facing page 116) until Toulouse-Lautrec made his appearance with what must have seemed to the public very startling inventions (see colour plate on page 91). His severe simplicity and exaggeration brought Western poster design nearer to the character of the Japanese print. He began a tendency that was further strengthened by the work of the Beggarstaff Brothers in England (see colour plate on page 93) and taken up a little later in Germany. This influence is still very much in evidence, although in Germany it reached a pitch of academism that in many examples deteriorated into a lifeless rendering of photographic dullness. However, the Western world owes to Germany and Austria an acknowledgement that they have kept a tendency alive which other countries dismissed until a few years ago. The new tendency in Germany calls for special commendation because it is reviving an older source than Toulouse-Lautrec or the Beggarstaff Brothers, namely, the use of symbol, and it is also indicating the use that can be made of the more recent developments in art. In France the tendency to-day is quite adequately shown in the posters of Orsi, Bouet, Poulbot, Rouffe, Pol Rab, Gontcharova.

In England experiment is very much in evidence, and the diversity of this is shown in comparison between Lovat Fraser, Herrick, Spencer Pryse, Hammond, Fred Taylor, Laura Knight, Wadsworth, Gibbings, Gregory Brown, Brangwyn, Paul Nash, and Wyndham Lewis.

In America the six best designers' work is shown.

F. G. Cooper's design, "America's Tribute to Britain," is of particular interest technically, for it is printed from a woodcut. In design it can be related to the illustration on page 57.

Most of the German posters reproduced belong to the movement of "Expressionism." They are less two-dimensional, and more expressive of a mood than preceding posters have been. Compare the illustrations on pages 155, 158, 161, 162, 163, and plate by W. Kampmann, in colour section facing page 168.



JAPAN SHARAKU, 1790

(British Museum)



JAPAN, AN ACTOR — KUNIMASA, 18TH CENTURY

(*British Museum*)



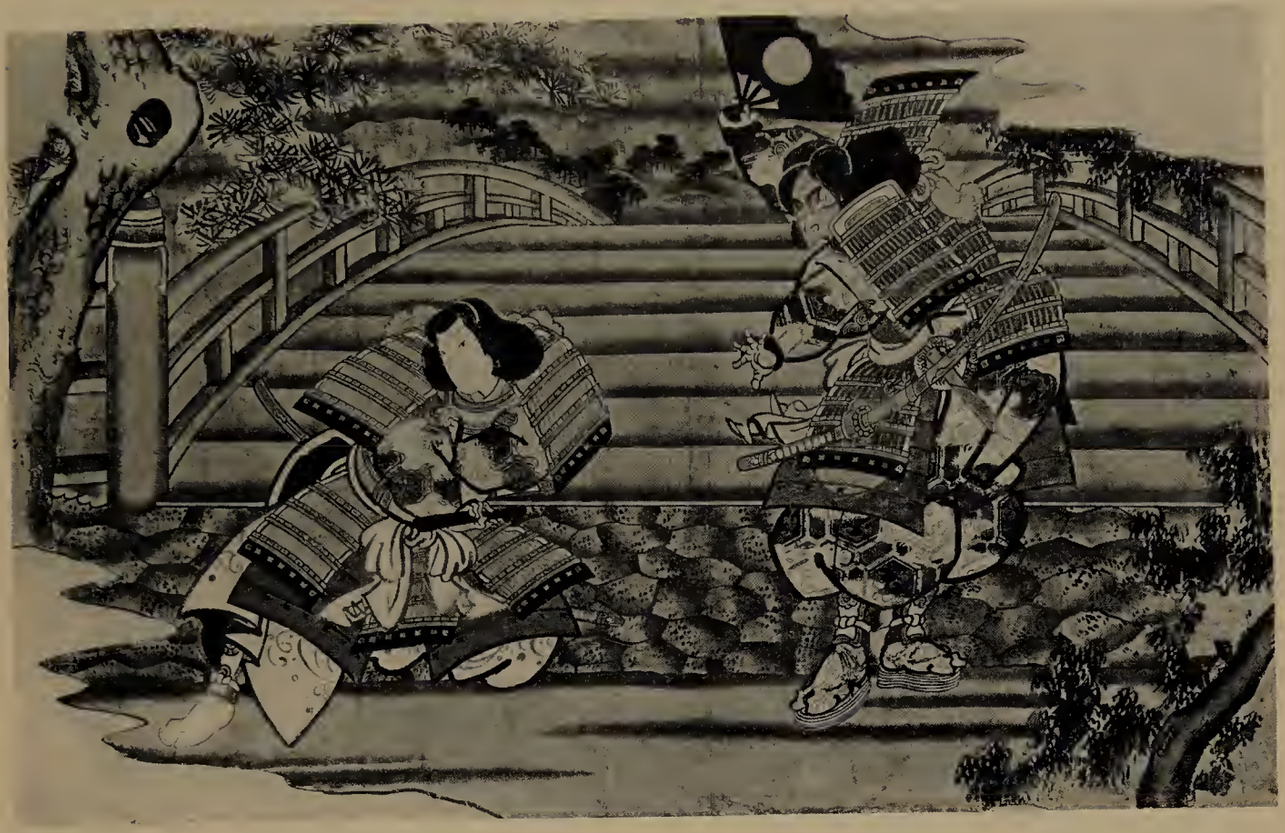
JAPAN UTAMARO, 18TH CENTURY

(*British Museum*)



CHINESE THEATRE POSTER — 17TH CENTURY

(*British Museum*)



JAPAN

THEATRE POSTER

(British Museum)

This does not illustrate one of the more obvious tendencies in modern poster design, but occasionally the spirit and free design, characteristic of Byzantine Mosaic, is interpreted in an individual and effective manner. Refer to poster by Gontcharova in colour section facing page 172, and to page 153.



DETAIL FROM A MOSAIC, *CIRCA* 547 ST. VITALE, RAVENNA

This example combines symbolism with suggestive realism. The figure shaped like a bell and occupying the space practically entirely gives to itself a commanding presence, almost a heroic one. This arched light against dark—or if used vice versa is one of the compositions most frequently used in poster design, and it is invariably effective.

Modern adaptations of this are often seen. By transforming the figure into contemporary dress and supplying an "By Appointment" coat of arms in place of the sun and crown, a shop front instead of the church, we have for a message something like the following. " Fashionable dress and robe makers, patronised by royalty. The address is such and such as indicated by the shop front."

Compare this example with the illustration on page 164.



BUKOVINA *CIRCA* 1600

(*From Die Christliche Kunst Des Ostens, Heinrich Glück, Cassirer, publisher, Berlin,* 1923)

The illustration opposite is anti-academic. It is an example of a tendency which has everything in its favour. For the sake of those people who call anything that is not like photography, "cubism," "futurism" and so on, it is well to point out that this example has none of these movements apparent in its composition. It has a fine silhouette, a freer use of line, and an exaggeration of character that compared with the illustration preceding gives it greater distinction and individuality. In composition it can be compared with a cross-bow. Refer to illustrations on pages 155, 157, and 161.



GREEK VASE DECORATION

(*From Paintings and Drawings from the Greeks, by* ERNST PFUHL, *see bibliography*)

These two illustrations show in black and white a similar point of view to some of the reproductions overleaf. They suggest technically the modern wood and linoleum cuts used now and again in the press for advertising purposes. They are the antithesis to the white and black design of Aubrey Beardsley (see page 125).

Compare with designs on pages 119 (Jossot), and 139 (Bianco, Lovat Fraser).



BŒOTIAN DECORATION

(*From Paintings and Drawings from the Greeks, by* ERNST PFUHL, *see bibliography*)

A definite source is illustrated in the following plates. The imposing of one silhouette against another, and the sharp contrast made by the exaggeration of the scale from light to dark, from flat to decorated pattern are forerunners both in spirit and technic of a great many posters since the late eighteen-nineties. On the whole, the significance of this tradition is that it combines characteristics of the engraving, of the Japanese print and the silhouette. The strict conventionalisation of the subject matter to the space it fills has a rigidity that suggests reproduction by simple and economical means.

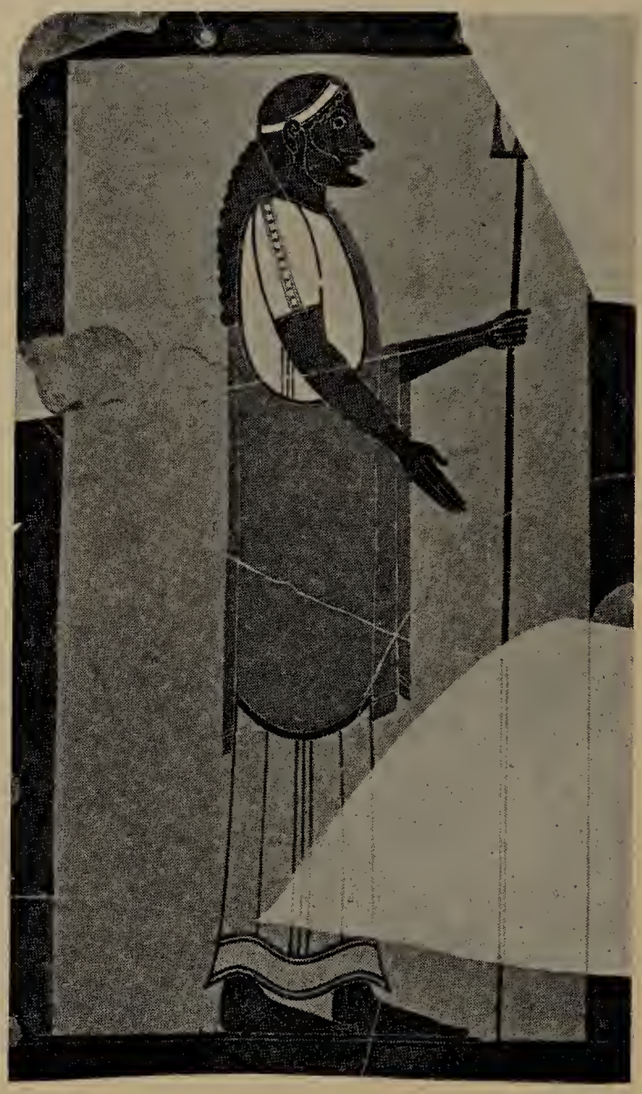
Compare with illustrations on pages 127 (Beardsley), 139 (Lovat Fraser), and 150 and 165 (Herrick), 91, and with plates in colour sections facing pages, 144 (Martin and Cooper), 136 (Cosomati and Ottler), 166 (Hammond).





CORINTHIAN DECORATION

(From Paintings and Drawings from the Greeks, by ERNST PFUHL, *see bibliography)*



CORINTHIAN DECORATION

(*From Paintings and Drawings from the Greeks, by* ERNST PFUHL, *see bibliography*)



DETAIL FROM AN AMPHORA

Rubbings from brass engravings would, at first sight, seem to have little or nothing to do with posters. They may or may not have had any influence on earlier designs; but the fact that they can and will is evident in more recent poster work. Earlier examples of rubbings have a rigidity in their design which is a characteristic analogous to the woodblock or wood-engraved designs seen occasionally upon the hoarding. Brass engravings have the severity of a silhouette relieved only by the engraved lines within, which do not take away the two-dimensional character of the design, but serve to increase its value as flat decoration.

Like good posters, superfluous detail is ignored, and only the barest properties are recorded. The sharpness of the edges is particularly in consonance with the design as a whole. Brass rubbings have a marked suggestive value to the poster designer. See illustrations in colour sections facing pages 136 (Fornaro) and 144 (Cooper).



ENGLISH BRASS ENGRAVING

CIRCA 1460

(*From The Brasses of our Homeland Churches, Homeland Pocket Book No.* 14
by W. E. GAWTHORPE, F.S.A. Scot.)



ENGLISH BRASS ENGRAVING 1498

(*From The Brasses of our Homeland Churches, Homeland Pocket Book No.* 14, *by* W. E. GAWTHORPE, F.S.A. Scot.)



ENGLISH BRASS ENGRAVING 1668

(*From The Brasses of our Homeland Churches, Homeland Pocket Book No.* 14, *by* W. E. GAWTHORPE, F.S.A. Scot.)

The independent silhouette is one of the most evident sources in poster design. The origin of the term itself and its application to this particular type of reproductive method defines in a measure the essential characteristics that go to the making of practically all posters.

The name "silhouette" was given in ridicule to cheap things by the public in 1759 after M. de Silhouette, French minister of finance, whose insistence upon economy in all ways was apparently very vigorous. Economy is the guiding principle wherever advertising is contemplated. The silhouette, by reason of the direct contrast obtainable is a forceful device for attracting the attention and since it has made the name of a cabinet minister famous for all time, this same virtue can be applied with equal effect towards making lesser commodities public.

Slender designs are not successful in silhouette when applied to advertising. Bulkiness is required and a contrasting of outer boundaries to avoid monotony. Space filling with silhouette is the most difficult of all, particularly when it is realised that the finished poster on the hoarding will be in competition with colour.

The silhouette absolute had been added to with colour and gradually the super-imposed or series of silhouetted shapes, like many of the Japanese prints, have produced a compound type of design which is familiar to our sight to-day. The Beggarstaff Brothers are chiefly responsible for this, though Toulouse-Lautrec indicated very strongly this direction as well.

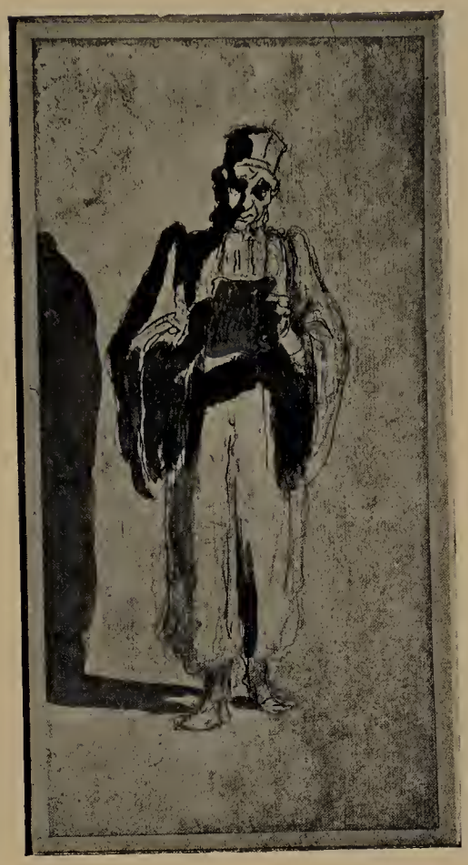
See examples on pages 107, 117, 118, 120, 127 (Penfield and Hassall), 130, 133 (Lovat Fraser), 138, 162, 166, 171, 174, and colour sections facing pages 120, 124, 136, 140 (Toulouse-Lautrec, Beardsley, Klinger, Hohlwein).



SILHOUETTE, CUT BY EDOUART *CIRCA* 1830

(*From The Art of Silhouette by* DESMOND COKE, *published by Martin Secker*)

The illustration on page 106 and the one opposite, both by Daumier, are more valuable as examples of the breaking up of flat patterns, but retaining a bold silhouetted pattern. Had he contributed more to the hoarding it is obvious that the whole of poster design would have been different. Only an echo of his influence has been seen in poster design and this very rarely. Compared with all the previous sources a study of Daumier's work will reveal a more human realisation towards design than do any of the others. His realism becomes a symbol for present and future designers to contemplate. See illustrations on pages 106, 113.



DRAWING BY DAUMIER 1840

(British Museum)



CHINESE STONE RELIEF
2ND CENTURY, A.D.



GREEK VASE DECORATION



ENGRAVED BRASS
1475



SILHOUETTE, 1827



DESIGN FOR ANNOUNCEMENT
BY M. LARINOW, 1922

A Comparison of Posters at the End of the XIXth Century in France, England, America, Germany



H. DE TOULOUSE-LAUTREC

FRANCE, 1893

(From the Editor's collection)



ENGLISH, 1895

BEGGARSTAFF BROTHERS
(James Pryde and William Nicholson)

(By permission of the artists)



EDWARD PENFIELD

AMERICA, 1895

(From Les Maîtres de l'Affiche, Chaix, Paris, 1896)



GERMANY, 1893

FRANZ VON STUCK

The Progress of the Poster from the beginning of the XVIII Century to 1924



1702

FRANCE

(*From Les Affiches illustrées, Ernest Maindron, Paris,* 1886)



FRANCE 1800

(*From Les Affiches illustrées, by Ernest Maindron, Paris,* 1886)



1828

FRANCE

(From Les Affiches illustrées, Ernest Maindron, Paris, 1886)



FRANCE, 1833 DESIGNER UNKNOWN

(*From Les Affiches illustrées, Ernest Maindron, Paris,* 1886)



EUGÊNE GAUCHE

FRANCE, 1842

(*From Les Affiches illustrées, Ernest Maindron, Paris,* 1886)



FRANCE, 1844 BERTALL

(*From Les Affiches illustrées, Ernest Maindron, Paris,* 1886)



GAVARNI

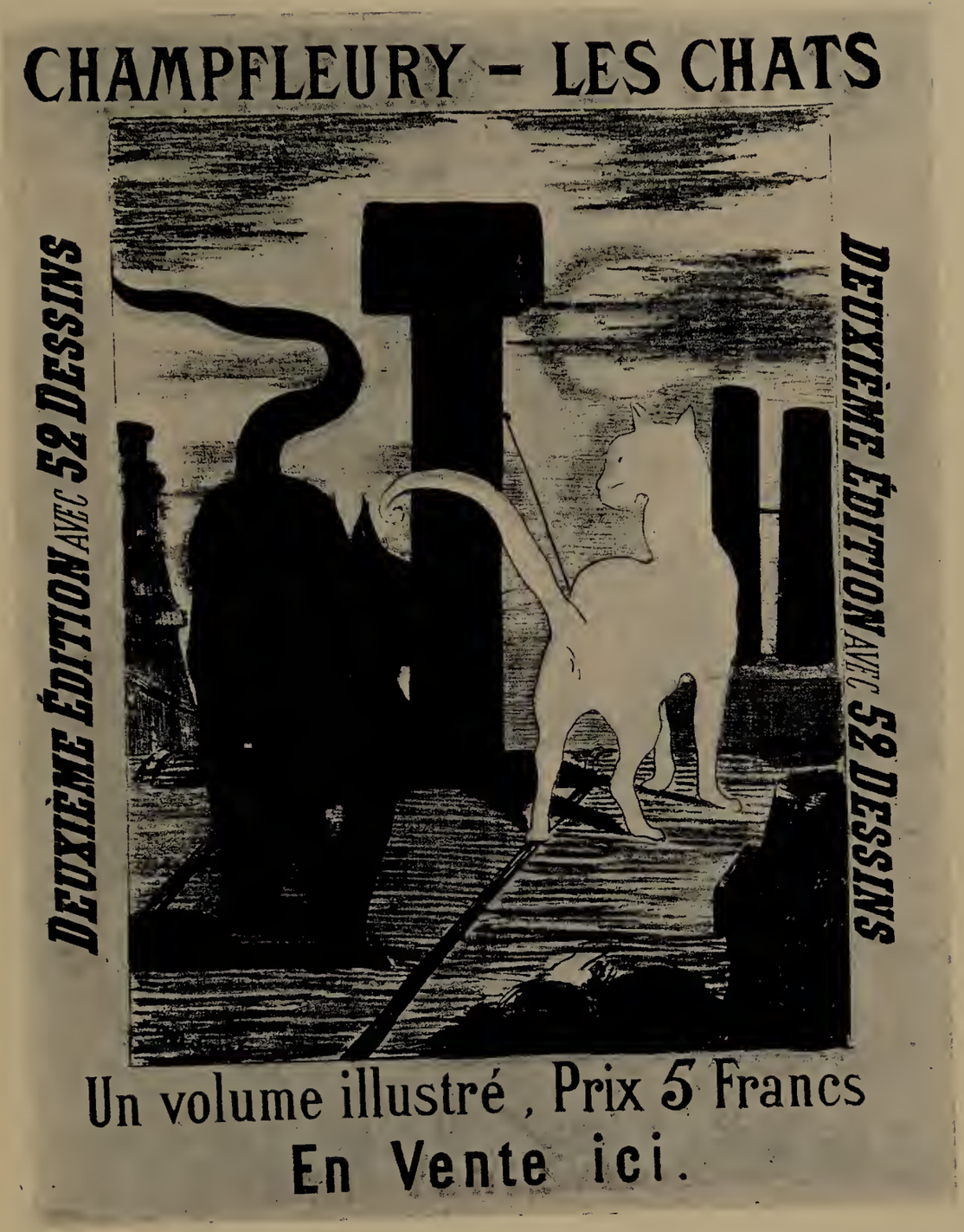
FRANCE, 1845

(*From Les Affiches illustrées, Ernest Maindron, Paris,* 1886)



FRANCE, 1862 DAUMIER

(*From Les Affiches illustrées, Ernest Maindron, Paris,* 1886)



MANET

FRANCE, 1869

(From Les Affiches illustrées, Ernest Maindron, Paris, 1886)



ENGLISH, 1871 FRED WALKER

(*Victoria and Albert Museum*)



H. GERBAULT

FRANCE, 1887

(From Les Maîtres de l'Affiche, Chaix, Paris, 1897)



FRANCE, 1891

BOUTET DE MONVEL

(*From Les Maîtres de l'Affiche, Chaix, Paris,* 1898)



ANQUETIN

FRANCE, 1886–95

(*From Les Maîtres de l'Affiche, Chaix, Paris,* 1899)



FRANCE, 1894 CARLOS SCHWABE

(*From Les Affiches illustrées, Ernest Maindron, Paris,* 1896)



BONNARD

FRANCE, 1894

(From Les Maîtres de l'Affiche, Chaix, Paris, 1896)



STEINLEN

FRANCE, 1894

(From the Editor's collection)



ANQUETIN

FRANCE, 1886–95

(From Les Affiches illustrées, Ernest Maindron, Paris, 1896)



FRANCE, 1893

H. DE TOULOUSE-LAUTREC

(From Les Maîtres de l'Affiche, Chaix, Paris, 1897)



CAZALS

FRANCE, 1894

(From Les Maîtres de l'Affiche, Chaix, Paris, 1896)
In the foreground is Paul Verlaine, in the background Jean Moréas



FRANCE, 1894

E. GRASSET

(*From Les Affiches illustrées, Ernest Maindron, Paris,* 1896)



H. G. IBELS

FRANCE, 1897

(From Les Maîtres de l'Affiche, Chaix, Paris, 1898)



FRANCE, 1896

JULES CHÉRET

(From the Editor's collection)



PHIL MAY

ENGLAND, 1894–95

(From Les Affiches Étrangères, Ernest Maindron, Paris, 1897)



ENGLAND, 1894

THE BEGGARSTAFF BROTHERS
(JAMES PRYDE AND WILLIAM NICHOLSON)

(By permission of the artists)



FRANCE, 1894–95 STEINLEN

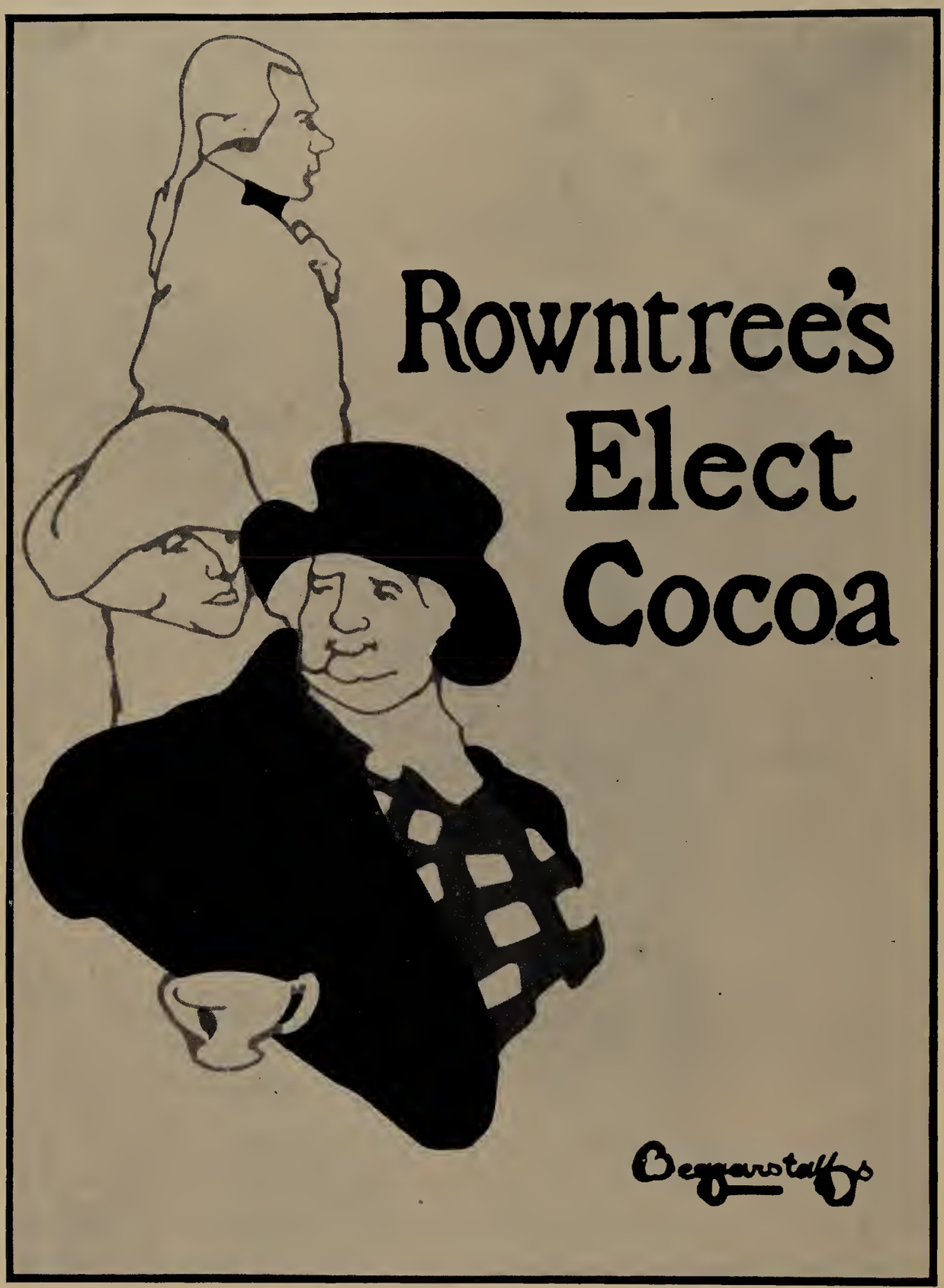


ENGLAND, 1894–95 DUDLEY HARDY



FRANCE, 1894–95 JOSSOT

(From the Editor's collection)



ENGLAND, 1894
(*By permission of Messrs. Rowntree*)

THE BEGGARSTAFF BROTHERS
(JAMES PRYDE AND WILLIAM NICHOLSON)



FRANCE, 1894

H. DE TOULOUSE-LAUTREC

(From the Editor's collection)



FELIX VALLOTTON

FRANCE, 1886–95

(From Les Maîtres de l'Affiche, Chaix, Paris, 1898)

120**



ENGLAND, 1894–95

DUDLEY HARDY

(*From The Poster*, 1898–1900, *London*)



AMERICA, 1894

WILL BRADLEY

(*From Les Maîtres de l'Affiche, Chaix, Paris,* 1898)



AMERICA, 1895

C. H. WOODBURY

(From Les Maîtres de l'Affiche, Chaix, Paris, 1898)



AMERICA, 1895 EDWARD PENFIELD



AMERICA, 1895 EDWARD PENFIELD

(From the Editor's collection)



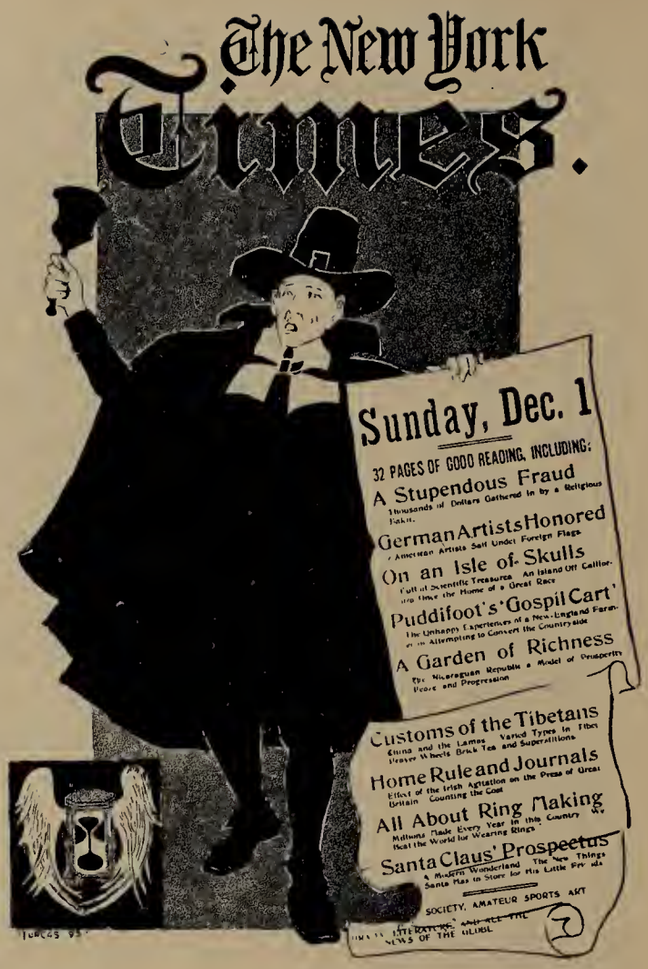
STEINLEN

FRANCE, 1895

(*From Les Maîtres de l'Affiche, Chaix, Paris,* 1899)



ENGLAND RAVEN HILL



AMERICA TURCAS

SALON DES CENT



FRANCE JOSSOT

DESIGNS OF THE 1890's

(From the Editor's collection)



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FRANCE, 1895

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ENGLAND, 1890 MAURICE GREIFFENHAGEN

(*From The Poster*, 1898–1900, *London*)



EDWARD PENFIELD



AUBREY BEARDSLEY



JULES CHÉRET



JOHN HASSALL

POSTERS OF THE 1890's

(*From The Poster*, 1898–1900, *London*)



GERMANY, 1896 OTTO FISCHER

(*From Les Maîtres de l'Affiche, published by Chaix, Paris,* 1897)



Cover, 1899 JAMES PRYDE

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AMERICA

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(By permission of the artist)



ENGLAND, 1921

(Designed and printed by Publicity Arts, London)



GRUN

FRANCE, 1897

(From Les Maîtres de l'Affiche, Chaix, Paris, 1898)



FRANCE, 1899

T. GOTTLOB

(*From Les Maîtres de l'Affiche, Chaix, Paris,* 1900)



GERMANY, 1900 EDMUND EDEL



GERMANY, 1905 FRANZ VON STUCK

(*From Das Plakat, Berlin*, 1921)

Contemporary Posters in

France
America
Germany
England
Russia
Poland
Soviet Russia
Switzerland



ENGLAND, 1921

F. GREGORY BROWN

(By permission of the artist)



ENGLAND, 1922

FRANK NEWBOULD

(By permission of Trust Houses, Ltd.)



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GERMANY

LUDWIG HOHLWEIN

(From Das Plakat, Berlin, January, 1921)

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GERMANY, 1913 — HUGO GRIMM

(From the Editor's collection)



ENGLAND — H. BRODZKY

(By permission of the artist)



GERMANY

OTTO OTTLER

(From Das Plakat, Berlin, January, 1921)



GERMANY, 1908

JULIUS KLINGER

(By permission of the artist)

136**



AMERICA, 1921

FORNARO

(*From the Editor's collection*)



AUX ÉLÉGANTES

ROBES · CHAPEAUX · LINGERIE · NOUVEAUTÉS · ETC

10 ROLAND MANSIONS
OLD BROMPTON ROAD
S.W. 7

ENGLAND, 1923

ALDO COSOMATI

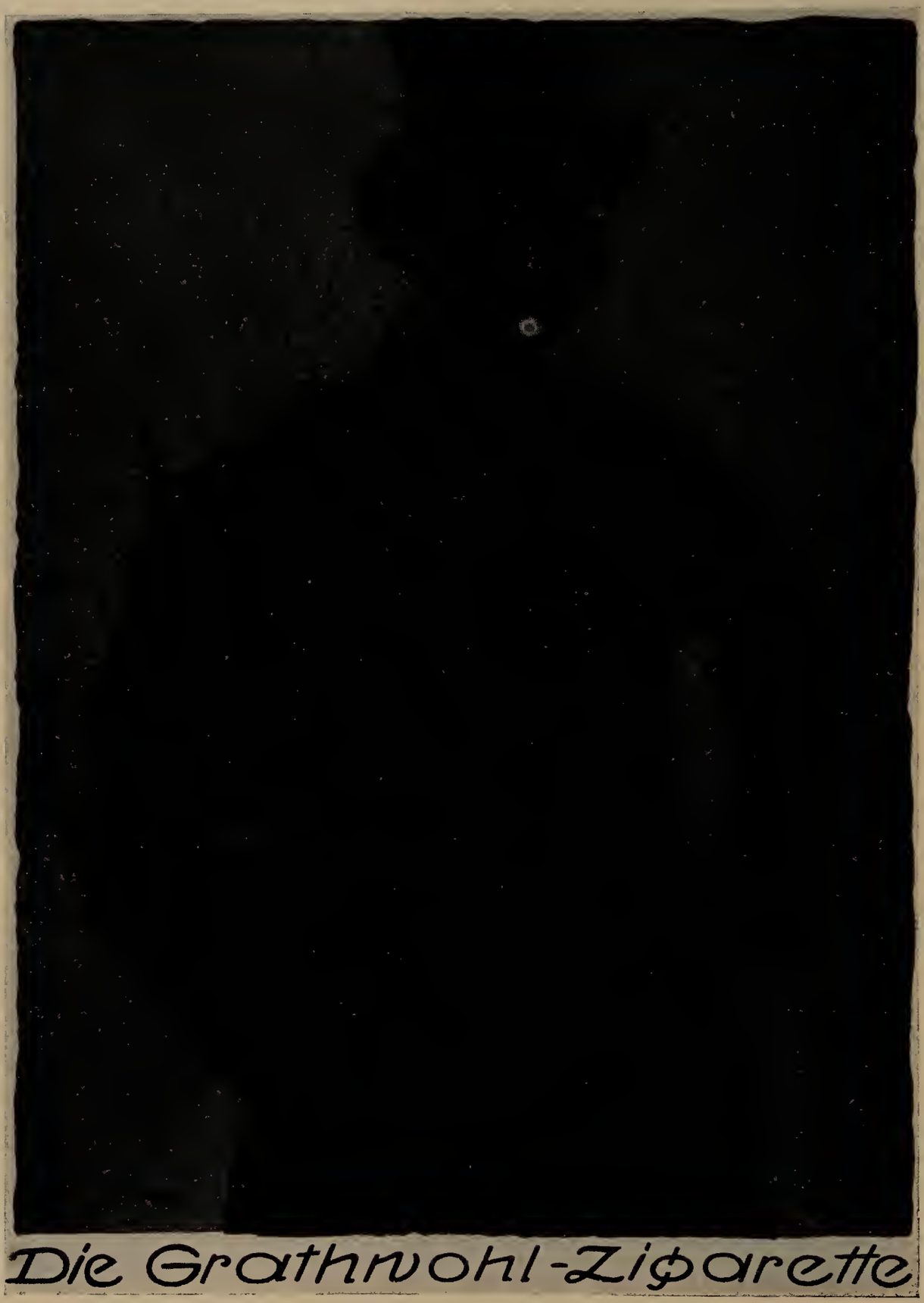
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ENGLAND, 1924

H. TAYLOR

(By permission of the artist)



GERMANY, 1921

LUDWIG HOHLWEIN

(*From Das Plakat, Berlin, January,* 1921)



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ENGLAND C. LOVAT FRASER

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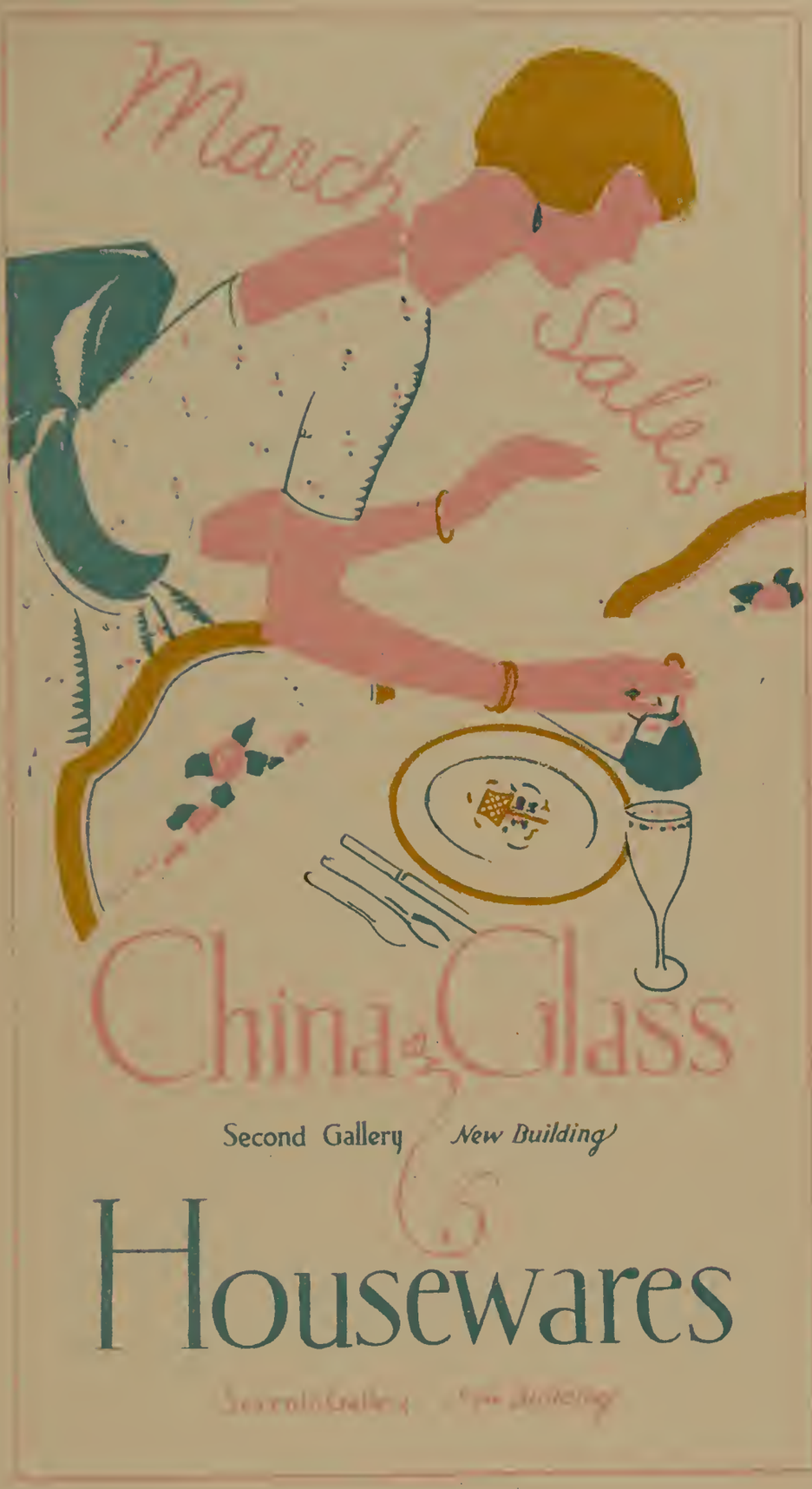
ENGLAND PAMELA BIANCO

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ENGLAND, 1922 — E. McKNIGHT KAUFFER

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AMERICA, 1923 GEORGE ILLIAN

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GERMANY, 1921 LUDWIG HOHLWEIN

(*From Das Plakat, Berlin, January,* 1921)



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ENGLAND

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ENGLAND, 1922 SPENCER PRYSE

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ENGLAND — LAURA KNIGHT

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For Easy Running



RENOLD
CYCLE CHAINS

ENGLAND, 1923 — H. TAYLOR

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AMERICA

F. G. COOPER

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FRANCE, 1920 ? CHARLES MARTIN

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HUNGARY, 1918 MICHAEL BIRO

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FRANCE, 1917

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FRANCE

STEINLEN

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FRANCE, 1916 POULBOT

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ENGLAND, 1923 SPURRIER

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ENGLAND, 1920

C. LOVAT FRASER

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FRANCE

ORSI

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FRANCE, 1924

BOUET

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FRANCE

POL RAB

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FRANCE

ROUFFÉ

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FRANCE, 1922

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MONARRO GROUP



GOUPIL GALLERY
5 REGENT STREET
SW

5th to 24th MARCH 1921

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GUY ARNOUX

FRANCE, 1921

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FRANCE

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RUSSIA

D. STELLETSKI

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SWISS EMIL CARDINAUX

(*From Das Plakat, Berlin, November,* 1920)



GERMANY FRANZ P. GLASS

(From Das Plakat, Berlin, January, 1921)



COVER DESIGN, GERMANY — CESAR KLEIN
(*From Das Plakat, Berlin*)



WILL DYSON

ENGLAND, 1922

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GERMANY REIMERS

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GERMANY — CESAR KLEIN

(*From Das Plakat, Berlin*)



GERMANY, 1920 MAX PECHSTEIN

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GERMANY — CESAR KLEIN

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ENGLAND, 1919

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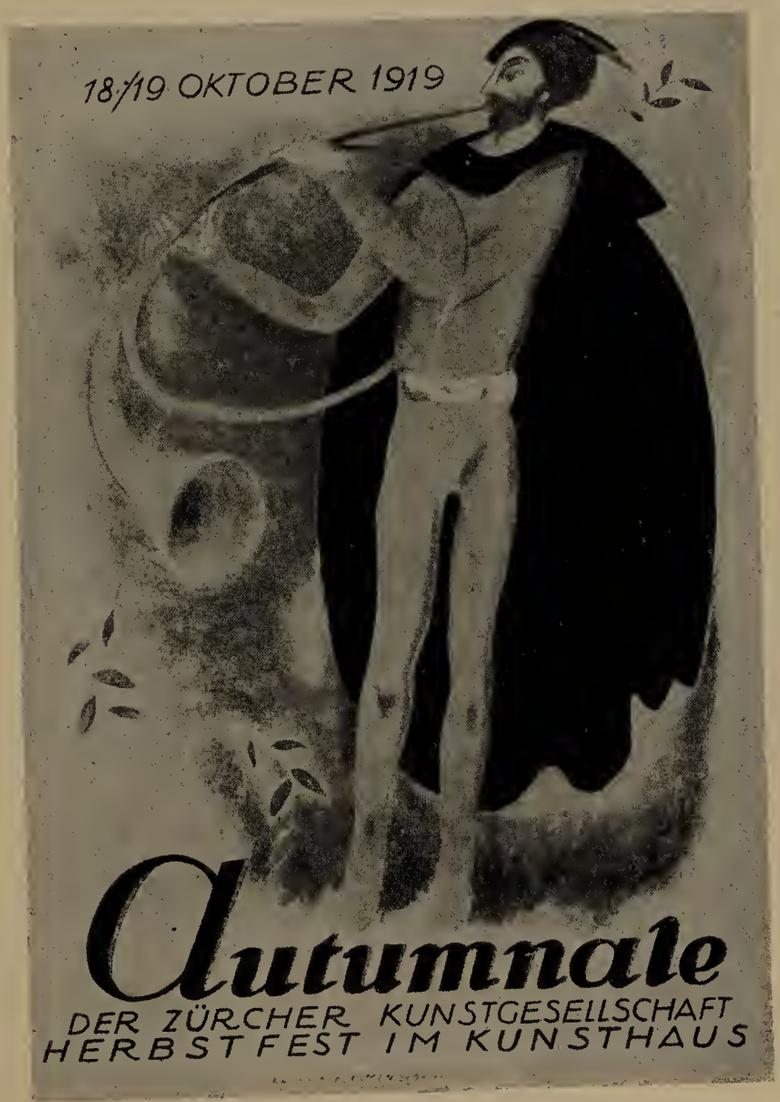
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GERMANY

WILLY JAECKEL



SWISS

OTTO BAUMBERGER

(*From Das Plakat, Berlin, November*, 1920)



GERMANY

WALENTY ZIETARA

(*From Das Plakat, Berlin, January,* 1921)



GERMANY, 1921 FISCHER-TRACHAU

(From Das Plakat, Berlin, January, 1921)



SWISS

WILHELM KIENZLE

(*From Das Plakat, Berlin, November*, 1920)



RUSSIAN SOVIET POSTER

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THE ROYAL MAIL STEAM PACKET CO

HERRICK

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164**



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ENGLAND, 1921

E. McKNIGHT KAUFFER

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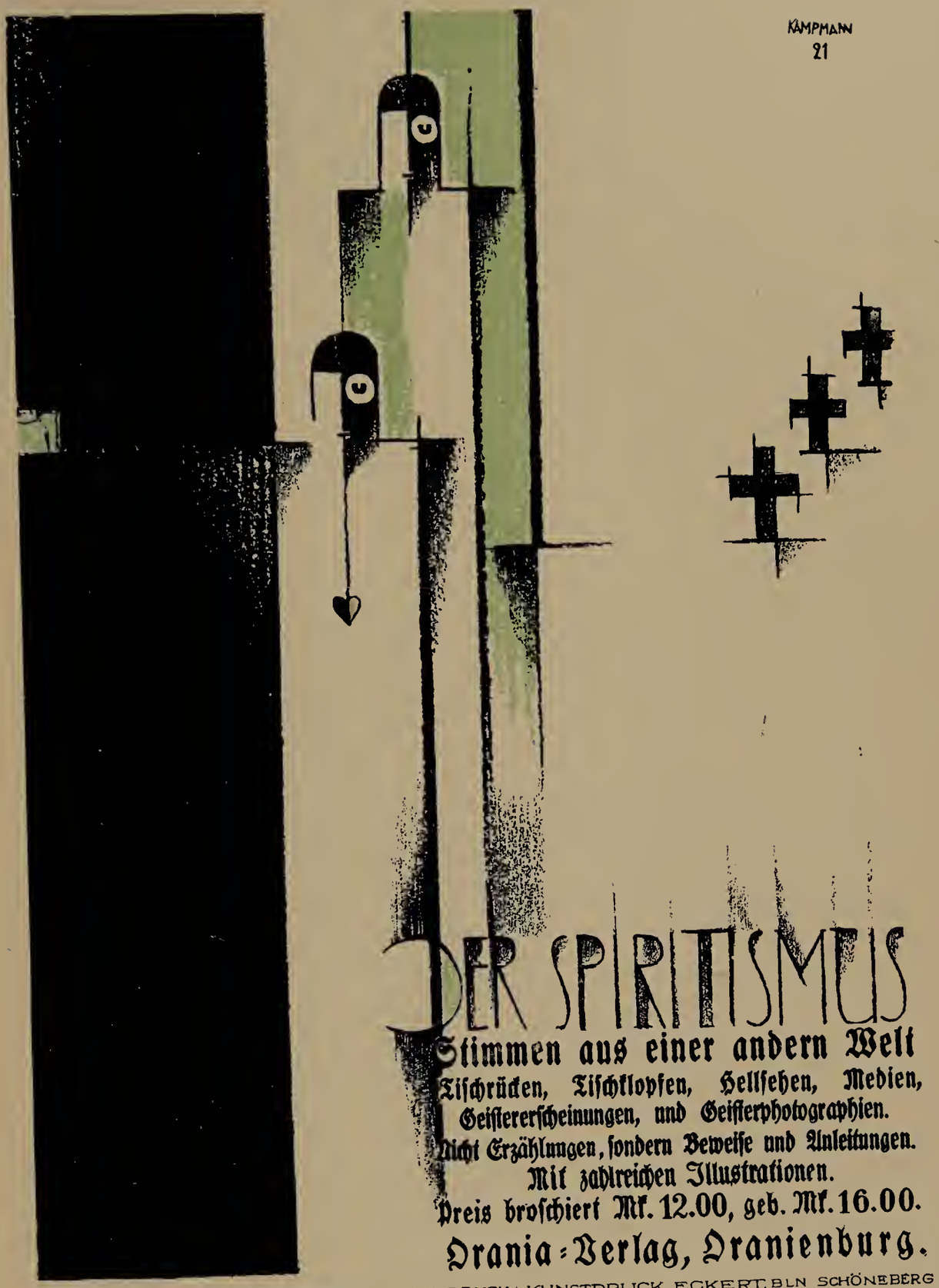




RUSSIAN SOVIET POSTERS
(British Museum collection)



RUSSIAN SOVIET POSTER
(*British Museum collection*)



W. KAMPMANN

GERMANY, 1921

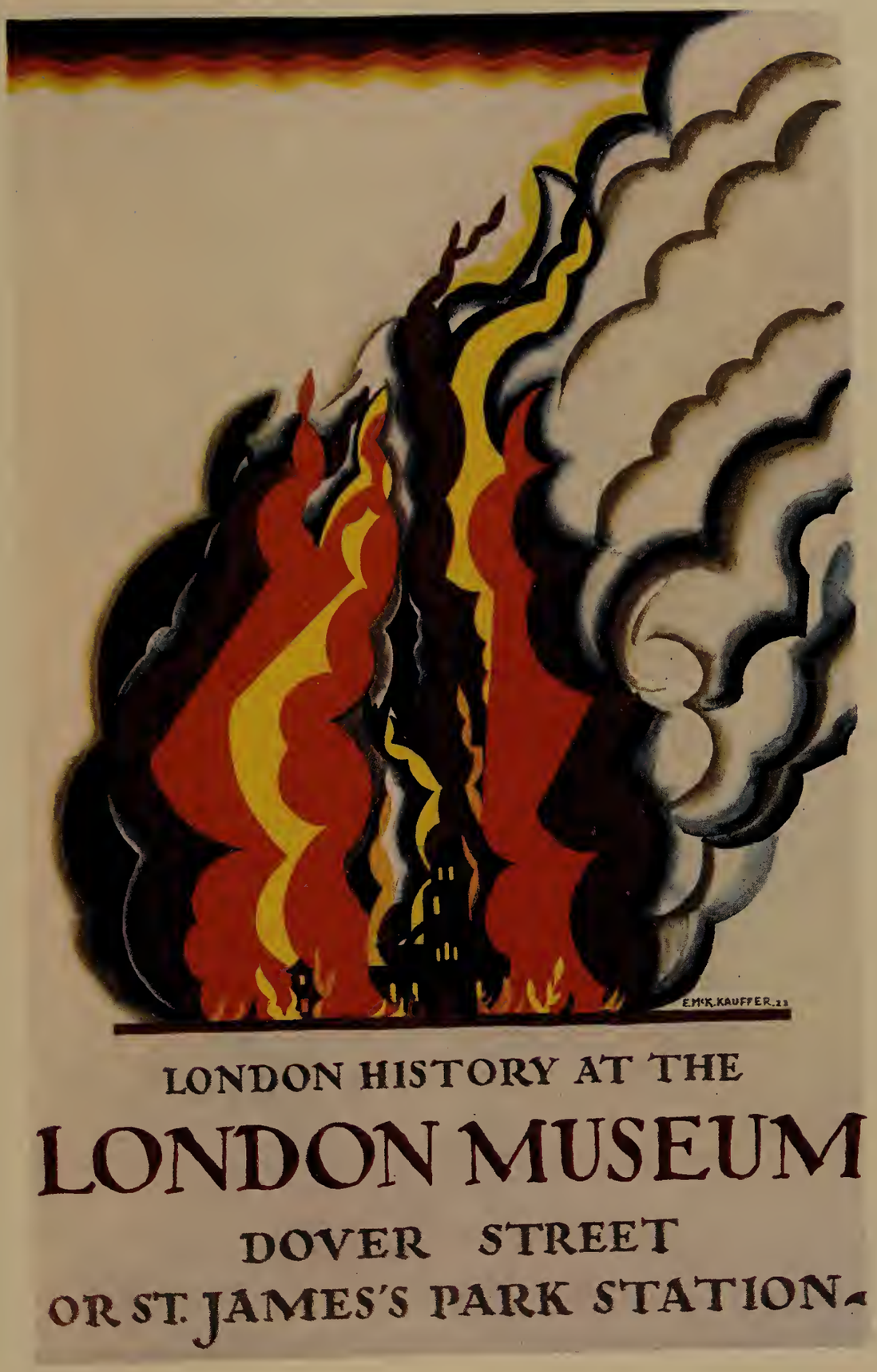
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ENGLAND

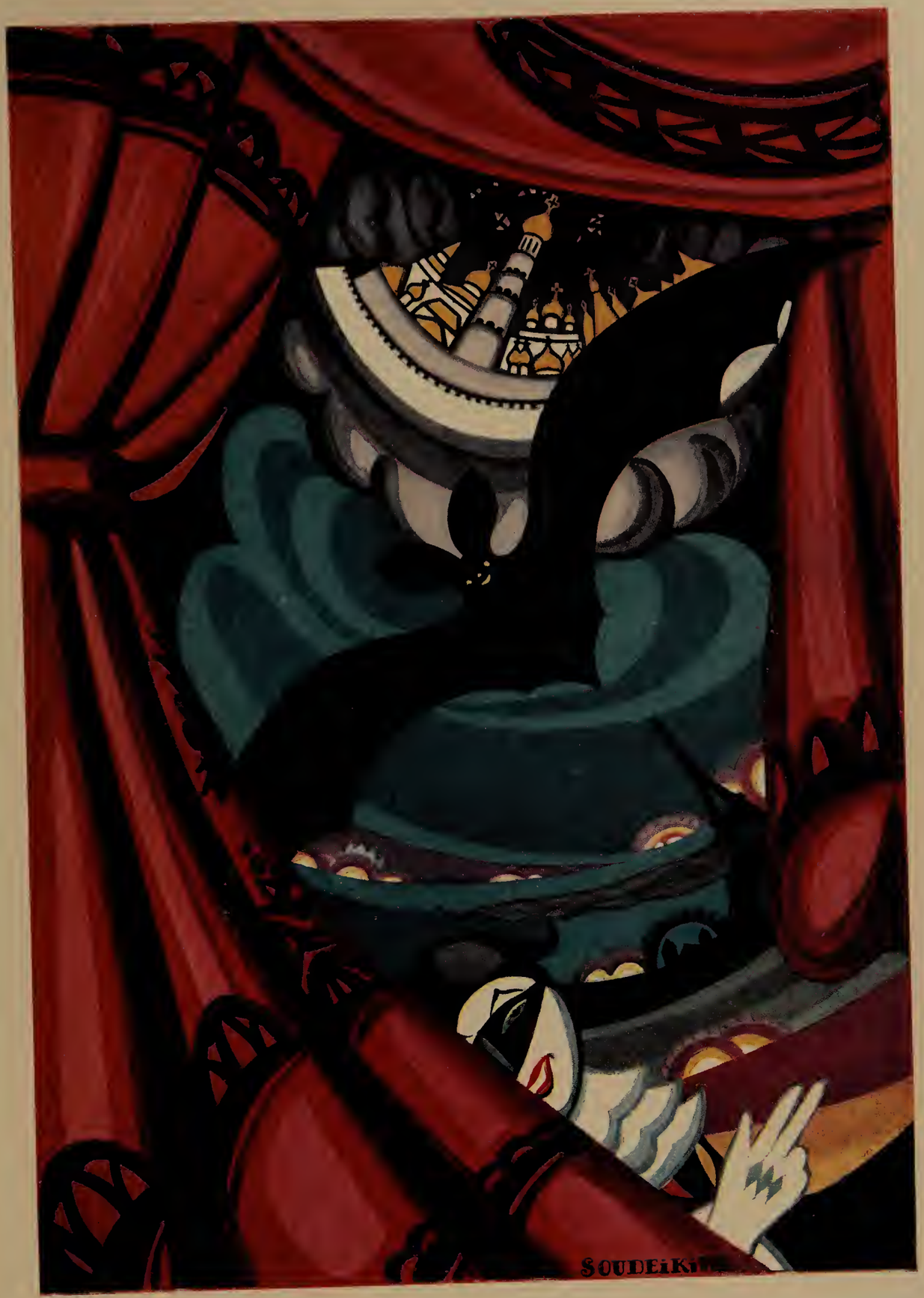
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SOUDEIKINE

RUSSIA, THE BAT THEATRE, 1922

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ENGLAND, 1924

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ENGLAND

1923

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ENGLAND

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Announcement of an exhibition of English graphic art



N. GONTCHAROVA

RUSSIA, 1924

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The above design was used on the poster advertising the Russian Ballet when in England. [EDITOR.]



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ENGLAND

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Examples of Modern Tendencies in Present Day Landscape Posters



ENGLAND

FRED TAYLOR

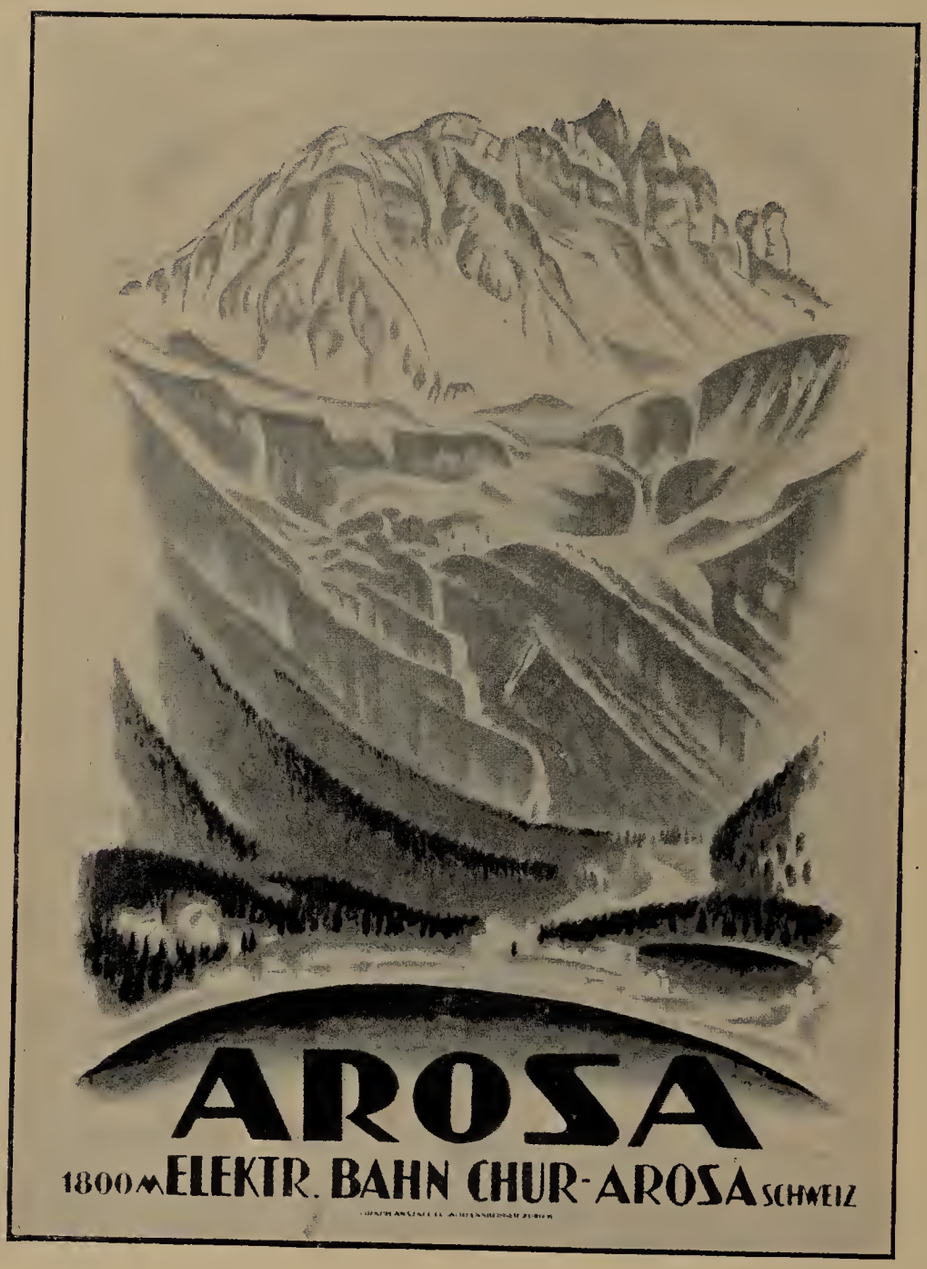
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ERNST BICKEL



NORWAY KROGH



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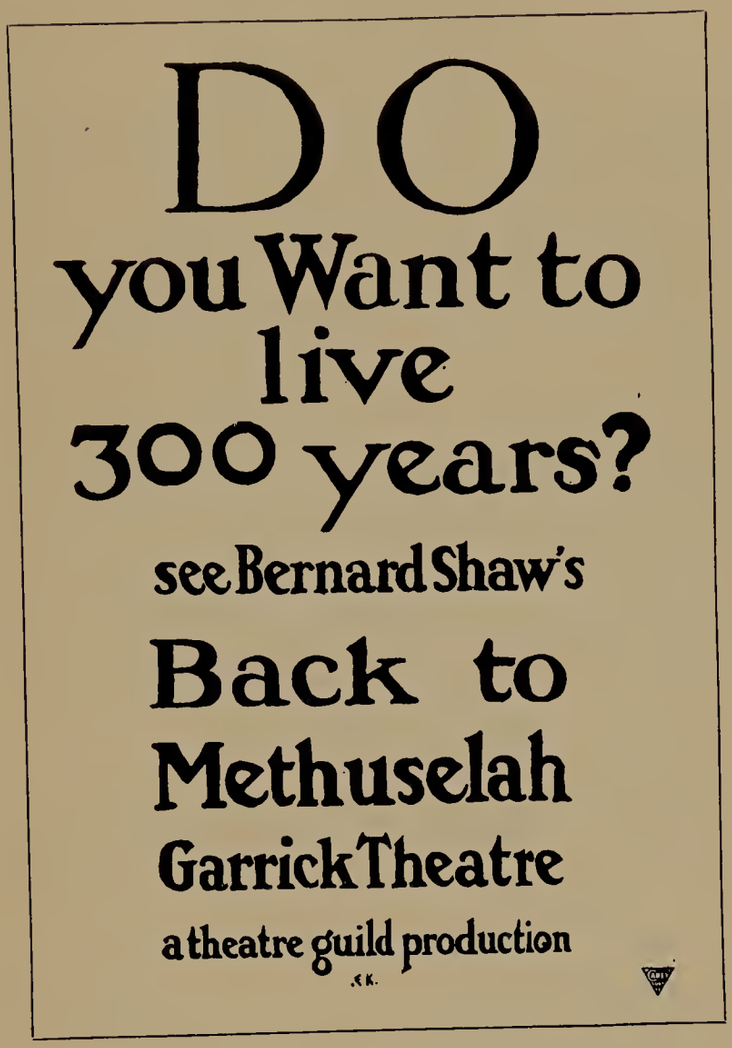


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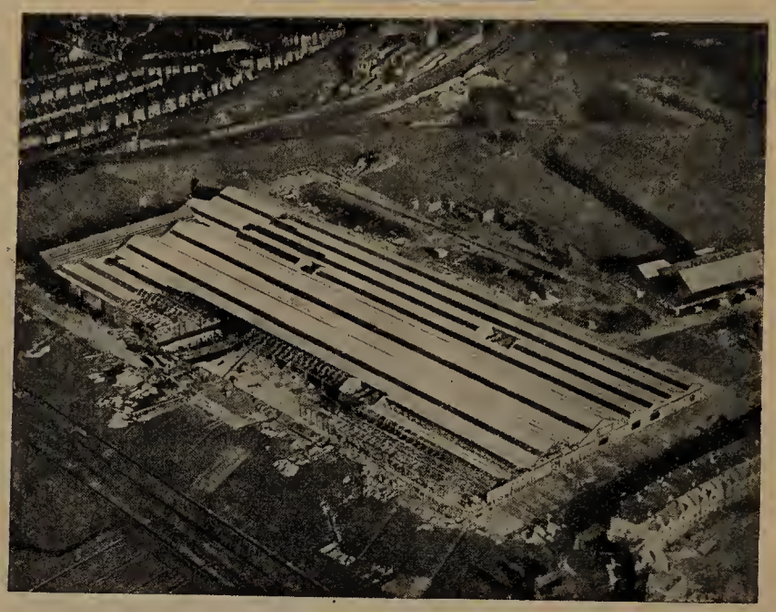
UNDERGROUND ANNOUNCEMENT
ALPHABET DESIGNED BY EDWARD JOHNSTON



FREELY LETTERED ANNOUNCEMENT
E. McKNIGHT KAUFFER

IMPROVEMENT

No 6



L. G. O. C.
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£500,000

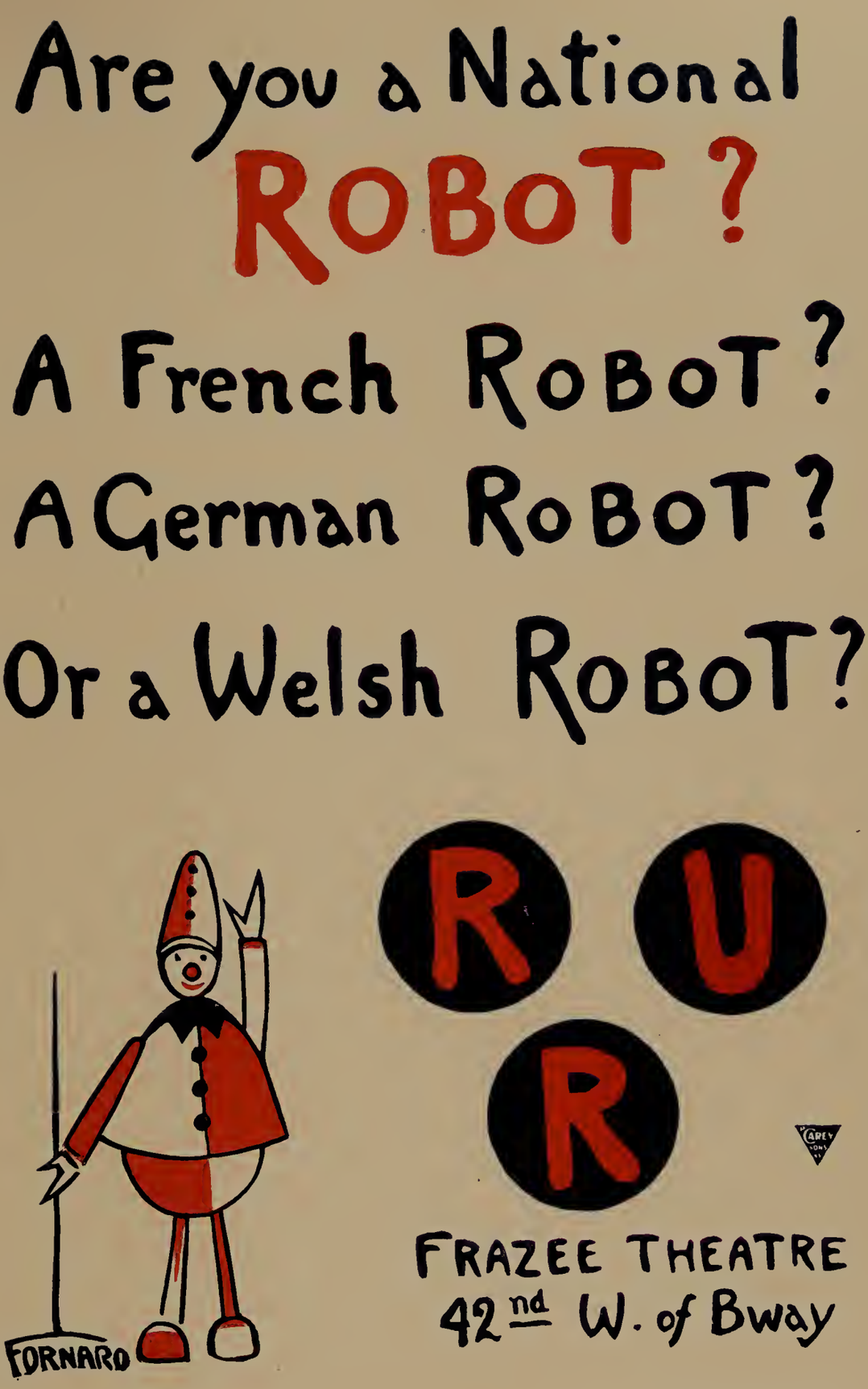
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GENERAL

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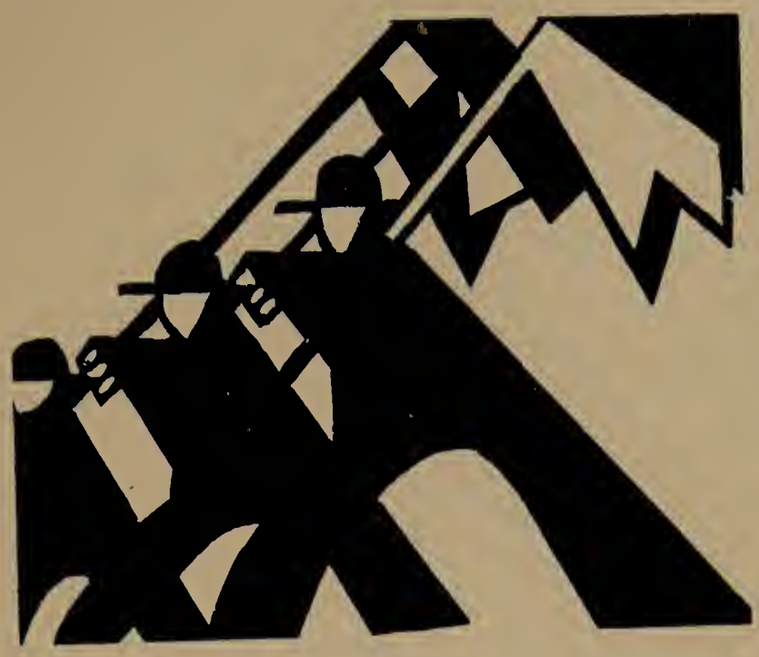
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FREELY LETTERED POSTER

FORNARO (AMERICA)

(From the Editor's collection)



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